

Music & Letters

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Influence of Organists upon English Music	1
Thomas Armstrong	
The Circumstances of the English Composer	12
H. J. Foss	
Orchestral Reform	21
Henry Welsh	
The All-Brass Ensemble	30
J. H. Elliot	
Bela Bartók	35
A. G. Browne	
Richard Strauss	46
W. L. Smyser	
Tolstoy and Moussorgsky	54
G. E. H. Abraham	
Stocktaking, 1930	60
Edwin Evans	
A Note on Folk-Song in Modern Music	66
M. D. Calvocoressi	
Dual Inspirations	71
A. E. Brent Smith	
Some Victorian Songs	78
J. A. Fuller-Maitland	
Register of Books on Music	81
Reviews of Books	85
Books Received	97
Reviews of Periodicals	98
Reviews of Music	100
Gramophone Records	103

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Influence of Organists upon English Music	1
Thomas Armstrong	
The Circumstances of the English Composer	12
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Orchestral Reform	21
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The All-Brass Ensemble	30
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Reviews of Books	85
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Music and Letters

JANUARY, 1931.

VOLUME XII

No. 1

THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANISTS UPON ENGLISH MUSIC

A PAPER READ AT THE NATIONAL CONGRESS
OF ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATIONS, 1930

It is customary for the organist to be spoken of with an air of condescension. Thus, I remember, when Dr. Sargent made his first London appearance as a conductor, one of the better journals, wishing to be complimentary but also clever, expressed the opinion that 'Dr. Sargent is an organist, but shows little evidence of that fact.' It was, in reality, quite wrong. Dr. Sargent showed every evidence of his cathedral training. He showed complete musicianship and the thoroughness that marks off the real conductor from the tribes of enthusiasts who graduate from conductors' classes with fine stick-technique, but without the ability to hear an inner part accurately; and this unassuming competent musicianship is precisely the quality that is typical of the organ loft. I mention this example because I wish to emphasise that fact at once. The musicianship of organists, I believe, is at least equal to that of any other class of musicians. And I also wish to put before you the suggestion, less readily acceptable, perhaps, that almost everything worth remembering in the history of English music can be traced to the influence of organists, working often in difficult circumstances, but fortified by the inheritance of a fine tradition of musicianship.

This is a large claim, and it will be well to see how far the facts of history justify it. Let us, therefore, look through Dr. Walker's *History of Music in England* and see what part organists play in it. It will be better, perhaps, not to consider at length the early schools of English music whose work, important as it was, is known only to the antiquaries. We may claim, however, that church musicians played a dominating part in this early development of music; and we may recall the theory of Helmholtz, supported by W. C. Sabine and

others, that the discovery of harmony itself was due to the long reverberation conditions of mediæval monastic buildings and churches, as opposed to the short reverberation of the Greek theatre or odeion where the music of classical times had chiefly been heard. There were generally in a monastic institution, no doubt, a number of men able to play the organ; it is therefore common to find no individual mentioned as organist, because there were on the staff several who took their turn at the instrument. We may in any case be sure that such men as Odington, Tunsted, Fornsete (or whoever wrote 'Sumer is icumen in'), Dunstable and Power, did their work not far from the organ loft. Even where no fact is known as to their association with monastic or cathedral establishments, as is the case with Power, we find their compositions entirely, or chiefly, ecclesiastical.

In the fifteenth century the most important name is that of Robert Fairfax, 'prime musician of the nation.' He was organist of St. Alban's Abbey, and a member of the Chapel Royal. With him Dr. Walker chooses for special mention Cornyshe, Sampson, Davy, Aston and Taverner. Of these Cornyshe and Sampson were both members of the Chapel Royal—the first Master of the Children, the second Dean—Davy was organist of Magdalen, and Taverner of Christ Church. Of Aston nothing is certainly known. In the mid-sixteenth century three names stand out: Christopher Tye was organist of Ely; Robert Whyte, his son-in-law, followed him; Tallis, one of the greatest, was at Waltham Abbey, and a member of the Chapel Royal. Others deserving mention are John Shepherd, organist and Fellow of Magdalen; Redford of St. Paul's; Merbecke of St. George's, Windsor; and Farrant, of the Chapel Royal and St. George's, Windsor.

In the great flowering time of English music, the madrigalian era, we find many of the most eminent composers, of both sacred and secular music, in organ lofts of cathedrals. Byrd was at Lincoln; Morley at St. Paul's and the Chapel Royal; Gibbons at the Chapel Royal and Westminster Abbey. These were, admittedly, the giants, but there were many lesser though memorable composers elsewhere. Bateson, who wrote the lovely 'Sister, awake,' 'Oriana's farewell,' and many others, was successively at Chester and Dublin; Weelkes was at Winchester and Chichester; Hilton was at Lincoln and Trinity, Cambridge. One could go on enumerating them; best, perhaps, to sum it up by pointing out that out of twenty-four English contributors to the 'Triumphs of Oriana,' no less than nineteen were on the staffs of cathedrals as organists or assistant organists. Probably an even higher proportion might be claimed, for in the cases of the other five composers, about whom no biographical information survives, the existence of anthems points to some connection with the church.

Under the Charleses, interest gathers again round the Chapel Royal. The talent that appeared in this choir in the early part of the seventeenth century was extraordinary. Captain Cooke, himself a Chapel Royal boy, and subsequently Master of the Children and Pisteler, trained amongst others Turner, Wise, Blow, Tudway, Pelham Humfrey and Henry Purcell, and after his time there was another able boy, Jeremiah Clarke. All these became cathedral organists except Humfrey, who died, and Turner, who became a very fine counter-tenor singer. It was indeed a wonderful period in the history of the Chapel Royal, and no one who has had the honour to belong to that institution can fail to remember with pride that the choir has been for three centuries a nursery of English music. The inducements offered to able men from all parts to join the staff as Gentlemen of the Chapel, and the pressgang warrant under which outstanding boys were obtained from any choir in the country, gave the Chapel a field of choice that no other similar institution has ever enjoyed. It is scarcely too much to say that the history of the Chapel Royal is the history of our national music, and it is not altogether easy to think of a name eminent in English music of the past that has not been connected in one way or another with the Chapel Royal: for the succession was maintained from the days of Tallis, Byrd, Purcell, Blow and Croft down to those of Wesley, Goss, Smart and Sullivan. This makes all the more tragic the recent abandonment of the choir school which had held so many talented boys. The post of Master of the Children was an honourable and historic one of great opportunity; it no longer exists, and the choir in its present form cannot possibly in the future be a school of music in the way that it once was. Economy in the Royal Household was no doubt necessary after the war; one can only regret that it had to be exercised in this direction.

Even during the domination of Handel in England we find the native tradition still maintained by church musicians. The outstanding composers at this time were Croft, of the Chapel Royal and Westminster Abbey; Greene, of St. Paul's; and Boyce, who held various posts in London, although extremely bad eyesight precluded him from occupying the highest. These, with less prominent composers such as Weldon,⁽¹⁾ Stroud and Hayes—all of them organists—maintained a steady flow of really English music. It is noticeable that even Arne, the most distinguished secular composer of the time, seems, in spite of the efforts of revivalists, to be less memorable even as a secular composer than Greene and Boyce, whose symphonies have lately been rediscovered with enthusiasm.

In the eighteenth century English music was admittedly in a poor

(1) One or two of Weldon's anthems are of the greatest beauty.

way. The names best worth remembrance are those of Cooke, Arnold, Battishill, Samuel Wesley and Crotch. All were organists; and Battishill's two best-known anthems are among the finest examples of cathedral music. Samuel Wesley, without doubt a genius, and the finest player of his day, was prevented from holding regular posts by occasional fits of insanity; a misfortune that has perhaps not always prevented organists from occupying important positions.

Even in the Victorian era, it must be conceded, the worthiest representatives of English music were the organists. The best church music of S. S. Wesley, Walmisley and Goss is more creditable to our country, and far more individual in itself, than even the most attractive works of Sterndale Bennett, with their too pale reproduction of Mendelssohn's charm. Who else is there? Pearsall, with a great talent, went for inspiration to the Elizabethans. Pierson, perhaps unfairly, counts for nothing to-day. The same is true of Macfarren, Hatton, Balfe, John Barnett. Ouseley's church music at its best has far more vitality in it than these. Even Sullivan, Irish-Italian as he was, and with his well-deserved fame resting on the lightest of light music, was essentially of the English tradition—Chapel Royal boy, pupil of Goss, organist of S. Michael's, Chester Square. What he inherited and learnt at the Chapel Royal, as he generously admitted, is more essential to him than what he derived from Mendelssohn, Schubert, Weber or Rossini.

One could carry on this reckoning into the present day. Stanford was twenty years organist of Trinity College, Cambridge; Vaughan Williams was organist of South Lambeth Church; Holst, of Wyck Rissington, in Gloucestershire; Ireland was organist of Chelsea Church for many years; Howells was sub-organist of Salisbury. Even William Walton, modern of the moderns, regards his experience as a Christ Church choir boy at Oxford as a strong formative influence. And no doubt it was so, for the music of a good cathedral choir is limited in style but excellent. No sensitive musician could spend several years in close touch with it, at the most receptive time of life, without absorbing certain standards of reticence and craftsmanship which will serve him well in any branch of the art.

So much for the facts. Most of the names best known in English music, it must be admitted, are those of organists. There are a few others, Campion the song writer, and Dowland; Wilbye, Avison, the writer of chamber music, the two Arnes, and Parry. But they are very few, until recent years. When we turn to consider the facts of the present day, however, we see a different view, and with the same breath in which we claim Stanford as an organist we have to admit that there is an altogether new eclecticism in English music of his

generation. Stanford drew his inspiration from very many sources; Parry was more deeply influenced by Bach and Brahms than by Purcell; Elgar derives largely from Wagner; the younger composers go even further afield; much has come from Russia of late years, *via* Paris. Quarter-tones are imported from Central Europe, and indescribable influences from savage races are said to meet and coalesce in order to produce a really popular piece of dance music for Mayfair. In the past, foreign influences, as in the cases of Lully and Purcell, Bach and Samuel Wesley, have been absorbed and fully anglicised. Whether our stock is virile enough for this to happen again we cannot say. We cannot even say whether it is desirable at the present time, when the whole epoch of nationalism in European art seems to be coming to an end. At any rate, we are bound to admit that the more modern of the composers we have mentioned are very lightly, if at all, held to church music; while the younger composers and musicians seem quite definitely antagonistic. It was formerly the ambition of every young musician to be a cathedral organist: to-day our young bloods think it rather a disgrace. Other branches of work attract many of the ablest men, whilst several causes have worked together to lessen the attractiveness of church music as a career. Even so, the bulk of the spade-work of music, especially in the neglected but important provincial towns, is still done by organists. The work of amateur orchestral societies, of choral societies, and among amateur musicians as a whole receives little notice, inevitably, in London papers; nor would it benefit, perhaps, if it received more; but it is after all the real foundation upon which music in England rests, and the importance of the work done in this field by organists is not sufficiently recognised. And if you reckon up the number of men exerting important influence, conductors or administrators, who have been or are organists, you will be astonished at the result. Wood, Harty, Sargent, Heward, Allen, Roper, Whittaker, Walford Davies, Buck, Dyson, Kitson, Kennedy Scott, Bairstow, Ley, Rootham, Geoffrey Shaw—why, one could go on for ever.

It would of course be idle to pretend that all these musicians have been drawn to the organist's career by love of the anglican church or even by admiration for the organ as an instrument. There are extraneous reasons why Englishmen have been so much connected with the cathedrals. One important one is the absence in England of wealthy patrons able and willing to employ musicians. There were, it is true, in the Elizabethan period some country houses where it was customary to employ a musician. Such a family was that of the Kytsons, of Hengrave, who did so much for Wilbye. We have not been without our talented amateurs, like Cavendish in the sixteenth

century, Onslow in the eighteenth and Pearsall in the nineteenth (who after extensive heraldic researches took to calling himself R. L. de Pearsall de Willsbridge). But we have had no patron in English musical history comparable with Cardinal Ottoboni, whose Monday concerts in Rome in the seventeenth century were famous throughout Europe; or the Esterhazys; or the elector of Mannheim, whose orchestra under Stamitz was such a force in the late eighteenth century. Remember how Beethoven's chamber music was generously paid for by Lobkowitz, Rasoumoffsky, Wolfmeier, Galitzin and others. Remember what Ludwig of Bavaria did for Wagner, and ask yourself whether an English monarch could have done it. Would public opinion have allowed it, even if an English monarch had wished to do it? We prefer our Royal Family to be sportsmen. As a nation we feel flattered, we feel we have done well, if they attend even one musical event a year; and the national attitude to music is well typified by the taste of our influential people. We must admit that since Elizabethan or possibly Restoration days the English upper and middle classes have had little real interest in music. The Prince Consort was interested, but he was a German. One reads biography after biography of distinguished men⁽²⁾ without finding a trace of interest in music, still less a knowledge of it. Ignorance of 'boetry' and 'bainting' would be generally considered to show a lack of education and to be a social disqualification. In Elizabethan days ignorance of music would have been thought so, too. But until recently it was the proud boast of many a 'cultured' man that he couldn't 'tell one note from another' and had never heard a Beethoven symphony. Would he boast so confidently that he was colour-blind and had never read a line of Shakespeare? He would conceal it like the plague. It would be wrong, perhaps, to say flatly that the English are an unmusical race. It would, in particular, be unjust to the 'working classes'; but one is tempted to believe it, especially after reading the panic-stricken writers who try so hard to prove the contrary.

In the absence, then, of influential patrons, and such means of livelihood as provided for foreign musicians, Englishmen turned naturally to the best-paid posts they could find. These were, strange as it may seem to-day, the cathedral organistships; and in their way, moreover, the cathedrals did offer to the composer the same sort of advantages, in a smaller sphere, that Haydn found in the Esterhazy appointment. They gave a small but regular salary, and circumstances in which a composer's work might be 'tried out' and put into

(2) Lord Balfour is a notable exception. His interest in music is well known, although he is said to have played the concertina for a whole day. It is also well known that he was regarded, popularly, with some suspicion, as he was thought to be an aesthete and poseur.

regular use. This is a great incentive to a composer, from lack of which many modern writers suffer; and however badly musicians may have been treated from time to time—we know from S. S. Wesley some of the indignities to which proved ability had to submit in his day—they have also much for which they ought to thank the cathedrals.

Again, in noting the way in which English musicians have gravitated to the Church, we have to remember the time-honoured preference of our fashionable public for foreign artists. John Field, after being employed in England by Clementi as a pianoforte salesman, had to go to Russia to find lasting fame as a composer and player; and it is well known that Handel's career in England was dominated by the fashionable and therefore fickle demand for imported castrati. This custom of reserving the highest rewards for the invader naturally drove English musicians into posts that foreigners, however eminent, were not prepared or not qualified to take. It was regrettable, because it tended to keep in the limited area of church music those whose talents deserved wider scope, able men who might in more favourable surroundings have matured to genius. Such a case was that of the wonderfully gifted boy, Crotch, whose precocity was equal to that of Mozart, and who might have developed as Mozart did had he been born in Salzburg instead of Norwich. On the other hand, these circumstances were a blessing to the Deans and Chapters, who may think themselves lucky that the comparative barbarity of the English people enabled them until recently to retain the services of the best musicians of the day by the payment of salaries that would have been poor remuneration to a footman.

But there are, in addition, reasons for thinking that the attractive power of church music over Englishmen rests on deeper bases than these; and that our church music has represented something particularly English and exclusively so, to which our countrymen have tended naturally to gravitate. It is not too fanciful to see a confirmation of this opinion in the prevalence of references to church music in our literature. Think of Milton's references to the organ; of George Herbert's poem, 'Church Music,' with its astonishing tribute:

Comfort, I'll die, for if you post from me,
Sure I shall do so, and much more:
But if I travel in your company,
You know the way to heaven's door.

Recall T. E. Browne's poem, 'The organist in heaven,' where in a fine sweep of imagination S. S. Wesley is heard extemporising for God's pleasure upon the thunder and lightning. Remember Robert

Bridges' tributes to Purcell, and the anagram upon his name that occurs in 'Eros and Psyche'; and recall how Thomas Hardy wrote in his diary in 1921 that he visited Exeter, heard 'Cry aloud and shout,' Croft, well sung, and thought that he would rather be a cathedral organist than anything in the world. He did not, perhaps, really know what he was saying: but these illustrations do suggest that English church music has meant something especially real to English men; has meant much more, for instance, than Palestrina means to an Italian musician, or Vittoria to a Spaniard, or Jacob Händl to a German.

We have seen, then, one or two reasons why English musicians have tended naturally towards church music: we may now look for the results. First, perhaps, in importance is the fact already noted that there has always been a steady stream of really English music. When the secular music failed, the church music maintained its individuality. And this tradition is not confined to composition. There still exists to-day, thanks to the cathedrals, an English school of organ playing of marked individuality. There is far more difference of style between good French, German and English organists than there is between pianists of those nations; and it may surprise some to know that there are in England to-day at least half a dozen organists whose technical and artistic equipment entitles them to stand on a level with the foremost executants of the time, pianists, violinists and 'cellists of world-wide fame. There was, in addition, a fine tradition of extempore playing. Those who have heard Kendrick Pyne at his best can hark back to Wesley and wonder what great fantasias have rolled round the arches of Exeter or Winchester or Gloucester as he played there after evensong into a darkening nave. It is sad that these works, sometimes, no doubt, inspired by a mood of the player, or by some aspect of the building of which they were in a sense a living part, should have been lost as soon as the echoes died away in the cathedrals. What would we not give to have heard Purcell 'play in' at Westminster on some great day: to have heard Greene extemporising to Handel upon the organ at St. Paul's which Handel so much admired; to have heard Samuel Wesley, an old man, improvising to Mendelssohn in Christ Church, Newgate Street, where he had gone to hear Mendelssohn play, and been persuaded to play himself. This ability to extemporise was an important part of the general tradition of musicianship that was handed down from master to pupil and is not yet lost, as visitors to Salisbury, York, or Eton may discover. Most musicians have known some representative of this school. When I remember Keeton of Peterborough, his talent as a composer, his skill as a technician, his limpid Mozartian pianoforte playing, his extemporisation, his skilful handling of boys' voices, how

he would play 'The Creation,' for instance, from full score and transpose it at the same time—when I remember this I realise what a sad thing it will be if this fine tradition should be lost.

How, then, is it to be preserved? It was, to be sure, an important factor that in former times the ablest men of the day were not as they are now, collected together in London, or rushing breathlessly from place to place in such a way that their personal influence could be felt nowhere at all. They were dispersed about the country. Each county had its centre of music in the cathedral, where there was a musician competent to take the lead in musical affairs, and to train students. The old articles system had much to recommend it, and still has, for those who wish to become organists. It gave a man not only knowledge, but also experience and a tradition. And where, after all, is musicianship, as we know it in practical life, learnt? Not in a school of music, or a conducting class, but in the practice of music itself, and by slowly accumulated experience. This was the way in which all craftsmen came to perfection. The painter began by learning to mix paints in the workshop of a master; the conductor learnt to conduct by playing the horn in orchestras; the organist learnt his art by daily contact with cathedral music, and with a master who was solving daily practical problems. The pupils hardly so much learnt their art, in fact, as they caught it, like a disease, by contagion. And there was, moreover, the dominating influence of one personality. This is what lacks in the great present-day colleges of music. Hundreds of organists are turned out; they play brilliantly, and not one of them has a style. How should they have a style? They have not lived in an atmosphere of style, or where any particular style was uppermost. They have lived, often not knowing in the least what career they were seeking, in a whirl of lectures, classes and pianoforte recitals; in a disorderly unregulated atmosphere of cramming for examinations; in a rush from elementary psychology to elementary ballet-dancing, from a smattering of the theory of criticism to a twenty-minute organ lesson. It is no fault of individuals, it is the fault of the system, and inseparable from the stress of modern centralised musical life. There are men in these colleges of music as well qualified to train and influence students as any of the old masters were: but they have no opportunity to do it. They are lucky if they see a student for as long as forty minutes a week, and this is insufficient for any real and lasting influence either upon musicianship or upon character. The strength of the old articles system at its best was the life lived together by master and pupil.

I do not wish to criticise harshly the great central schools of music, which are necessary to the musical life of the present day, and to one of which I am personally much indebted: it would be

true to say that the purely cathedral training of the old system would be to-day an inadequate preparation for an organist who wished to get the best out of his abilities, and to qualify himself for a position similar in influence to that of his predecessors. However much one may admire the past, English music has a future as well; and the truth is that the organist will still retain much of his old influence on the music of the country so long as he is musically qualified to do so, and no longer. His predecessors, when they were appointed, were not antiquarians, or old-fashioned young men, but the most brilliant and up-to-date of the moderns, highly trained, and no doubt often extremely experimental. Think of Purcell, with the new Lullyan style simmering in his brain, organist of Westminster at twenty-one. What must the elderly canons of Hereford have thought of Wesley's playing, when at the age of twenty-five he arrived from London to succeed Clarke-Whitfield, a musician of very different style? And when Keeton, on trial for Peterborough, played Mendelssohn's Fourth Sonata to Hopkins in the Temple Church in 1870 (he was then twenty-three) the performance was thought to be a virtuoso effort of astonishing skill, as no doubt it was, to a generation brought up with short pedal-boards and exceedingly heavy tracker action. The point is that organists in the past have been among the most advanced musicians of their time, and if they wish to retain their influence they must make themselves so now. A command of organ technique, though essential, is to-day the least of the organist's qualifications. The man who wants to make himself a position in the provinces such as his predecessors enjoyed must make himself a good pianist, and be qualified to give really expert pianoforte tuition. He must be able to take charge of a chorus and orchestra and conduct it efficiently; he must know the literature of music, and the classics of all kinds; he must understand the aims and methods of the modernists, and know how to find his way about their scores; he must hear enough music to form his own canons of taste and high standards for his own work; he must acquire for himself a culture that will enable him to take his place among men of other professions. These qualifications can best be got, no doubt, in one of the big musical colleges, which are situated in towns of ample musical, educational, and social opportunities. But in addition to this training he needs some experience of the practice and traditions of church music such as was given by the articles system, and can be had to-day by apprenticeship in one of the better equipped cathedrals. Given these qualifications, and sincerity of aim, there is still work of a sort that is worth doing, there is still a position of real influence, particularly in the provinces, for the man who is primarily an organist. The curses of the profession are the man with his tongue in his cheek, and the musician who takes

to the organ only as a *pis aller*, when he finds himself not good enough to earn a living in any other way. On a different footing are the hundreds of amateurs, imported into the ranks because of the scandalously low salaries offered to organists. Many churches are not able to employ a professional musician, whose place is taken by a man or woman earning a living by some other means. These amateurs are seldom trained musicians in any way, but can play hymns to the value of ten or twenty pounds a year. They do useful work, but their artistic vagaries reflect upon organists in general, and the man who cares for his work may well say, with the psalmist, that 'they laid to my charge things that I knew not.'

Whatever the faults of organists and the difficulties of their position, however, there can be no doubt about the part they have played in English music in the past. There are only three branches of the art in which an English musician can rightly boast himself in the company of foreigners. These are English church music, English choral singing, English organ playing. In each we have our own style and a kind of excellence which other nations, however musical, do not produce: and for all we have to thank the cathedrals and cathedral musicians. We should do well to recognise the fact before it is too late. If the younger musicians are turning to other branches of music, that is not entirely a matter for regret. Church music, however perfect in style, is a limited art: it is one beautiful room in the great house of music, which is a house of many mansions. In so far as this turning away from church music means a broadening of outlook and a bigger achievement for English musicians, in so far we welcome it. We regret it only in so far as it might mean the end of a tradition that has for centuries produced an unfailing succession of fine men and fine music. But I do not think we have reached the end yet, by a very long way.

THOMAS ARMSTRONG.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE ENGLISH COMPOSER

THE student of musical history would be considered ill-equipped if he could not trace the influence of an Esterhazy's patronage on Haydn's music or the part played by material circumstances in the musical life of Wagner, Bach, or Schumann. Criticism of a living composer, on the other hand, rarely makes similar allowances. A new composition is posed against an æsthetic background and judged for its musical content alone, while to posterity is left the kinder but—because of time's assuaging finger—less patronising task of making excuses for a composer's failure owing to the conditions of his time or his own personal circumstances.

I am neither complaining nor explaining. Clearly, the less our musical taste and judgment are influenced by mere immediacies, the better. But there is no harm in interpolating between more musical assessments some random notes on the conditions of composition in England to-day, with especial reference to orchestral works, so that we can understand how local influences are working in our own time.

In common with her sister arts, music is the provision of the few for the many. The problem of making this provision available to the world at once arises and is solved by the printing and publication of the written notes. That is, however, only a half solution, for as a picture stored away in an unvisited gallery is not fulfilling its chief artistic function, so music that is published but not performed is available to the public only in a theoretical sense.

There can seldom have been a time when it was easier for the living composer to get his music published than to-day. Performance, that other half of music's life, is not always so simple. There is certainly a growing tradition in England of making constant use of that admirable corpus of lesser works which are written in an English way by Englishmen for daily specific uses. No country can at this moment boast of a better or even a similar provision of first-rate working material for students of every grade. But it must be remembered that only the larger works of our day will be held to account by future historians; they offer indeed the severest test of ability to write and the surest exponent of the composer's thought. And, as a work increases in difficulty of technique, in scope, and in depth of thought, simultaneously and in direct ratio of dimensions there grow up other obstacles—the difficulty of testing its merit, of

getting it published, performed, and in any way made available and useful.

Deliberately, I only touch lightly on the economic side. The ordinary music is bought by the public, and so can provide revenue to the composer and financier. There is a secondary importance in this facet of composition since it adds a money value to the other more musical inducement of inspiration. But the larger music is not bought by the public: I do not deny that it has economic value of a complicated kind, and may have, one day, more of a simpler kind. But in a general way it is true that the bigger kind of composition is costly both to the composer and to the publisher, if there is one, and that the end which it achieves is at present very minor. I mean that the composer can expend a great deal of money, in time devoted to composing and in cash devoted to copying, or the publisher a greater sum devoted to engraving and printing, or both, and with what result? Sometimes something: one cannot say more.

The point is important; it raises the question with what aim does the composer write the larger works on which posterity will base a judgment of his age and his contribution to it? Towards what object does he direct the creative urge that makes him write at all? Clearly he does not write for money's sake, and though one has heard of those who will perjure themselves and bribe others to gain a reputation as composers, one could not fairly say the object was mere notoriety. For as yet the living English composer has not attained that position of habitual choice and repetition which belongs to the minor classics. The programme maker still fills up his space with Max Bruch and not Howells, with Saint-Saëns and Lalo in preference to Vaughan Williams and Walton. Even when he pleads necessary contrast or style of a particular sort or suitability, he is probably pleading ignorance of what is available. While there is admiration for what our composers are doing, it does not extend to performing them often. There is already a tradition of the English school, but it is a different tradition from that of the lower classics. British works are given as an exception, but 'Kol Nidrei' or the Franck Symphony as an established practice. We do not recognise Bax and Ireland as more than our own composers: they are still struggling young men, whom we compare, in technique, with the enlightened student and not with Goldmark or Reger. At this stage we do not consider seriously whether Bax does not write better than Brahms for, say, two pianos. Anyone who has heard them in juxtaposition knows that he does, but we cannot help believing that while the one is only a talented experimenter, the other is an international idol.

The fact is that English music is still not recognised at home in the

very way it needs to be : we pursue an all or none policy with English composers which applies to no other nationality. Abroad, as M. Prunières has recently shown, English music is assumed to be guilty, and, even more, to be the favoured darling of nepotism, before it is ever put on trial. One wonders how M. Prunières has had opportunity of judging : one knows he has not. Yet the well-intentioned B.B.C. segregates British music at the promenades as if it were leprous, or comparable only to Dr. Johnson's performing dog. The successful Courtauld concerts bring no shame on their promoters for performing only one English work, and that an old one, and employing no English artists except the conductor. Sir Hamilton Harty has retired this year to an earlier and safer period than to-day. Mr. Leslie Heward shows his knowledge of the Russians more than his liking for his own countrymen's works in the Birmingham programmes. The L.S.O. and the lesser orchestras occasionally venture as far as Delius, or run an English festival, but never substitute a good English work for a bad foreign favourite. (The idea of comparing two works in sheer merit and not on so-called popular appeal or nationality is a remote conception.) The enterprise of Norwich extended to two new works : one wonders if it will repeat them. The composers conducted, not as Haydn used or as Liszt and Chopin played, but almost as an excuse for the works to be endured by the public. So neither composer has heard his work as it sounded to the audience, any more than have all those others who achieved a performance which they had to direct, with probably no other to follow. The illusion of the composer's conducting, as a pleasure for the public, is shown by Tschaikovsky's experience with the Fifth Symphony. It is not uncommon for a publisher to find that by the time he has accepted and printed a work its bloom of novelty has already faded : no first performance is left to attract a conductor or promoter (does it really attract an audience?). It may well be that in a hundred years, or even less, a time may come when our English works will enjoy the present—I would not say popularity, but regular selection and remembrance of the Academic Festival overture, the B flat minor concerto, the 'Peer Gynt' suite. By then we shall all be dead and gone, and in the meantime, the period in which I am interested and our composers are too, what is the daily state of affairs in which the composer has to work to meet ultimate criticism?

For, if I may judge from the compositions that I personally know, the music is not the principal reason for its failure to get into the repertoire. If this or that music is not chosen for a concert, the music is always made to bear the blame : the chooser is not blamed, nor the circumstances that may have dictated his choice : only the composer. The evidence of time's test cannot be adduced,

for the test has not been applied. In addition, for that part in this failure which may be laid to the music's charge, the conditions of the time are not allowed for. The popular appeal of current music is not known, for it is never played to the public sufficiently often for them to compare it with the continually repeated and therefore accepted favourites of an earlier date.

The formality of the modern concert is responsible for a good deal of our present tradition of unenterprise. It is a product of the principle of the division of labour, a system to which the conservative musical world has not yet adjusted itself. This principle has made a sturdy class of concert givers, who live on their audience and must, it is supposed, give them what they want. Knowledge of what they want is derived from past statistics, I gather, though no margin of error is left, for example, for the conductor's failure to make a work sound right. Many modern works have suffered oblivion on account of the bad quality of their first hearing: often it was just that which the public, rightly, did not want. But the fetish of the public is everywhere esconced in modern chantries. A young conductor who asked the B.B.C. for an opportunity to prove himself was told in a sincere and friendly letter that much as they wished otherwise, their duty at present was to give the public what they wanted. He was not told (1) on what grounds it was known that the public wanted the present staff of conductors or (2) on what evidence it was judged by those who had not heard him that the public would not prefer him to the existing staff—indeed, that he was not what the public wanted.

The formality of the concert has made a performance of a MS. work by a living composer an event, a bitter test of success or failure in a career, instead of an opportunity to hear and perhaps to rewrite a work. No longer has a composer a status as a musician; he is exalted far above that into a remote, almost celestial thinker in abstract terms. He has no playground for his fancies, nowhere to find out if his tentative thoughts are merely amusing or quite serious in practice. If he writes something a little less in scope or seriousness or even merit than his last work, his career is watched by the critics, his trail is followed by the hounds. We love our Homer with such lip service that he may nod and we smile at the proverb: but the composer may not nod—we are too interested in his isolated labours, too sure, in our hearts, that his nodding may mean what we suspected, that he isn't really a stayer of the course, like Drdla, or Fucik, or Puccini, or Korbay, or Giordano, or Massenet, or Stange, or Järnefelt, or Rubinstein, or Ponchielli, or all those other great foreign musicians who provide the common daily fare that is described in the *Radio Times*.

The change in mentality which this attitude has brought into music is obvious to anyone who meets composers. They get performed enough to evoke gratitude. But they do not write with the certainty of performance. They do not write to try a work out. The dog on whom we try things exists to-day only as a snarling cur. The public concert, like a children's party and not like a music-making among friends, is no longer the friend but the patron of the composer. It is regarded more seriously than the music played at it, so that composers are at once afraid, flattered, sycophantic in its presence. Hence the constant falling back on outworn tradition—it can do neither harm nor good. No one but a critic can know how limited is the repertory, with what a hectic flush of pride a new work is introduced by the so-called enterprise of the concert giver. The divorce of the composer from the public can only be compared to the stay-at-home's knowledge of a far-off country that is gleaned from pictures and the geography book.

The public is so often quoted as the final judge of musical merit that one asks how the music that is played to the public is first judged worthy of so being played. It is judged from a reading of the score. Now indisputably, even a modern score can be satisfactorily read; but it is equally obvious that the same mental effect cannot be obtained from a reading that can from a performance. The difficulties are not only those of time and detail, but of purely aural effect, of space and acoustics, of physical reception by an independent organ, of appeal to the other men around the hearer who with him make up the audience. I point the finger not at the selector but at the principle of selection. The painter must subject himself to a selection committee, but he is not condemned upon a photograph of his picture. To find other means of adjudication is, for a composer under our musical constitution, too expensive a business, for if he can afford the money for a try-out, he still would be likely to endanger his career. Yet who can judge the public's mind? In the world of books a reader is employed, a highly specialised and experienced person, a Meredith or a Morley or a Garnett: and their class, poor souls, is historic for its mistakes. Could we not also pillory, for our amusement and posterity's tuition, some of those who have not helped our young composers find their feet—unless it were that they had our pity for working in so unprogressive a system? As long as we judge a composer more upon his concert performances than upon his written works—and this, it is provable, we do even when the concerts come after his works are published and open for study—we are handicapping him from using those very performances as a means of further developing his own powers: we are making into an event what should be no more than a profitable lesson.

The formality of print is a parallel to the formality of the concert. In both cases money is involved, and as it happens it is easier both psychologically and practically for a composer to recover from a failure at a concert than to withdraw an early work—successful or not—from a publisher's catalogue. Yet many works remain on the market that are nothing but youthful indiscretions pressed upon the public so that the composer may get himself known. Publication is a serious matter but it is taken to-day too lightly only because there are so few other ways of reaching the public. With the formal concert, the inclination is never to test a work before it is judged. The composer and his colleagues or friends decide before the test can be risked.

Leopold Stokowski raised the point with me in conversation. His vivid words I cannot remember. But, with his orchestra at hand, he pleaded for a chance for the professional conductor to co-operate with the composer in producing an even better work than the latter had actually conceived. From what other source but the practical is advice really worth taking in composition? We rush into print, he said, too soon, before the work is tempered and ready to withstand the onslaughts of another, later, less influenced audience. The fight for print, for performance, for recognition—natural as it may be—is healthy only when it does not weaken the one serious aim of the composer, the aim to gain a permanent place alongside those who are now recognised, in fifty or a hundred years' time. I do not say the British composer cannot achieve this object, but I do say that the conditions of his time do not help towards the achievement which lies within his abilities. Critically we expect of our composers what we should not expect in any other past period, and are none the less surprised because we think we find less than that.

The admirable example of one of our foremost composers, in hearing his works at least twice before he allows them to be published, is I fear evidence of his integrity and simplicity of mind rather than of my offering a mistaken plea. There is little chance of such co-operation between conductor (by which I mean concert and audience and experienced concert giver all at once) and composer in England. We ask the living composer to compose: if he does not, then English music, we say, has died out since Stanford's day, was indeed a mere flash in the pan. But we do not buy his works. If we perform them, we must be given them gratis; nor do we like the performing fee. Composition is actually (and I speak from a small experience) the most laborious and thankless of all tasks. The idea that a day devoted to composition is equally worthy of hire with a day devoted to the mechanical adding of figures or the tending of a stocking machine is beyond the scope of our developed economic system. Somehow, if the foolish composer has no patrimony, the foolish publisher must

pay. But it is no difficult matter to prove that it would be wrong for the future of music if the publisher were responsible for the daily living of a composer, unless his works earn for him his income. Patronage of the art of music has not only changed in kind, it has all but ceased in fact. The rich to-day spend their money on other, less patriotic, more spectacular offerings than that of the composer to posterity. The honourable exceptions are few.

The result of this is, of course, the isolation of the composer, with very few exceptions. He is not a working musician under our system in the way Bach was: he has not his own orchestra to play his works, he has not opportunities to provide music for special occasions of his own, has no special occasion except infrequent commissions for which he must provide music or lose his post. Our modern English composer is not a provider of music so much as a self-constituted performer (of thoughts, not of instruments), always on test, always liable to be found out by us listeners. His trial continues, while the trial of the minor accepted writers has ceased years before.

This is the abstract side of composition, the composing itself as an action. On the practical side, we have seen what the modern concert means, and have yet to examine the other chances for experimenting with his work that the composer can find to-day. The B.B.C. stands, in a certain way, between the two positions of public performance and practical investigation. The one other outlet, save for those of the not very important period of studentship, seems to be the Patron's Fund. I speak of it with gratitude: at these rehearsals I have heard the tentative speech of many fine musicians. But as it grows older it appears to lose touch with modern composition, perhaps because of a certain dark atmosphere of the beginner, the unsuccessful, the unimportant, which has beset it.

More important are the facts that it is isolated and that it represents no serious matter in musical experience for the composer. The Patron's Fund offers a chance of testing the orchestration of a work but not of its quality in a concert room or in fact. It is the musical parallel of play in the world of psychology. For the composer is never so much a student as when he has left his period of tutelage. In it, he studies technique; after it, he is studying his audience, music, life, everything. We cannot quite believe of our composers that they are living artists—when they are fifty years of age, we continue to examine their equipment before we perceive their thought. But the composer is not only a creator, he is eternally an investigator, of his fellow men and their thoughts, of musical imagination and its effect, of speech, of art, of everything that he can comprehend. It is the wider experience that he must have to find his own musical

development. 'Life,' said Samuel Butler, 'is like playing a violin solo in public and learning the instrument as one goes on.' And in this, as in so much else, composing is very much like life.

Perhaps the fundamental problem is economic: at least it is the result of the unconscious growth of a social system that has not kept pace with the parallel growth of its population and (I believe) its musical talents. If this is so, one may be pardoned therefore for looking again to the B.B.C. as the first source of assistance. Its opportunities for the encouragement of native music and particularly orchestral music, with the expenses of providing first score and parts and later performers, are as illimitable as they are neglected. No one appears yet to have seen how powerful for good the B.B.C. might be if it attacked the musical situation of the day in a really fundamental manner of thought.

While the B.B.C. has obviously the greatest number of opportunities for performing new works, at the same time other ideas are needed. A kind of 'clearing house'—I cannot say 'publication house'—of manuscript orchestral works would be invaluable: some organisation which would have the orchestral parts made, and duplicate scores if needed, of MS. works which it could bring to the general attention of conductors and induce them to play with a frequency only less than that allowed to the smaller foreign composers. Proper business management should not be neglected for MS. works nor reserved exclusively for printed scores. The endowment of a developed scheme of this kind would be a notable act of charity from one who thought first perhaps, in our English way, of a hospital or a children's play-centre. Run on a big scale it would open up opportunities for the composer of a kind that do not exist to-day.

A modified version of the same project, a library of orchestral and other big manuscript works, not hidden away from view but really brought to the performers' notice, and having branches in England and America, has been the writer's unfulfilled dream for some years. It could not but encourage if it did not create enterprise.

Is it only a dream? When I think of the ingenuity, the unselfish labour, the breadth of thought, that have been freely given by busy men to the municipal government and the development of the growing towns of England, when I think of Bristol and Croydon and Leicester, and all the amenities that they offer to their residents, I cannot but feel confident that one day some similarly constituted energies of organisation will be devoted to the task of putting our musical polity into a sound position. The talents that have kept sterling at par could do wonders with English music. Just such talents, with a devotion to music, are what music needs to-day.

The questions rise to the tongue—but what is to be done, and who is to do it? The first is partly dependent on the second. The first moreover is hardly a writer's function to solve, beyond suggesting, as has been done above, greater enterprise and a clearer standard of choice and judgment from conductors, help with the testing of works in public, and with the expenses of the necessary orchestral material, and a closer connection between the composer and daily music. It has been the object of this article rather to analyse the conditions in England to-day as they affect the composer's thought, to compare them with those of an earlier period and those of other countries. That this is a necessary if only preliminary task will be realised by those who know that Paul Hindemith's Viola Concerto has been performed some fifty times more than William Walton's, and that an English piano concerto published in Germany had seven performances in the first few weeks of its life. Of what other English piano concerto can the same be said? I have humbly attempted to show what influence on our musical output conditions of this kind may have.

HUBERT J. FOSS.

ORCHESTRAL REFORM

IN certain musical circles in this country, the view is sometimes expressed that the playing of the best British orchestras is vastly inferior to that of world-famous organisations such as the Vienna Philharmonic, the New York Philharmonic, and various others. The purpose of this article is not to contradict that statement but rather to uphold it—with a definite object in view. It is time, I think, that we analysed the situation carefully, in an endeavour to discover the real seat of the trouble. Needless to say, this will necessitate some plain speaking.

Before we go any further, it would be well for me to say that I am assuming that my readers are aware that a difference *does* exist between British orchestras and others. We have had ample opportunities for comparisons to be made. The Berliners have visited us regularly for the last two or three years. Then we have had the Budapest Philharmonic, and more recently, the Vienna Philharmonic, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, the New York Philharmonic-Symphony, and the Colonne Orchestra. To the man who has made it his business to hear these orchestras, each one appeared to have its own peculiar idiosyncrasies and merits, and yet all of them proved themselves superior to either the Hallé Orchestra or the London Symphony Orchestra, or whatever name the best orchestra in the Metropolis is going by at the present moment. I shall discuss aspects which hitherto have received insufficient attention from writers on musical subjects, and shall attempt to elucidate the fundamental reasons for our orchestral inferiority, mainly in respect to the actual methods of playing the instruments, and the instruments themselves, with a view to improving our musical reputation.

After having heard many different orchestras in this country as well as abroad, and notwithstanding the recent success of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra (which, I believe, was due more to the glamour attached to the genial Toscanini than to the actual playing of the orchestra), I have come to the conclusion that the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra is far and away the best in the world, and it is for this reason that I propose to take it as my model. I might remind my readers that this orchestra has a great tradition behind it, and that it has had the world's greatest and most inspired conductors as its leaders, and also, that it has earned the unanimous praise of all who have come into contact with it. It impressed us mostly by reason

of its power, its delicacy, its precision, its tone, its refinement, sheer virtuosity and versatility. But also, one felt that every single member of the orchestra was on intimate terms with the composer.

One may well enquire as to the causes of this remarkable musicianship, and also, whether it will ever be possible for England to possess an orchestra that can fairly compete with the Viennese. I hasten to assure my readers that I am optimistic. Yes, but only on condition that England adopts a totally different and new attitude towards music. It is high time that we began to regard music as a form of, let us say, serious literature, and not merely as a recreation. One critic expressed this very aptly when he said: 'We won't misquote Shakespeare if we can help it, but we don't mind misquoting Beethoven.' Music should be regarded as just as important a part of a cultured education as reading and writing. But apart from its educational value, the spiritual and emotional qualities of music make it, for many people, one of the necessities of life. If we are unable fully to appreciate how important a part music takes in the daily lives of Germans, Austrians, and Italians, then we must be taught. And, furthermore, if we desire definitely to improve our musical standard, and particularly our orchestral playing, then let us lay aside our far-famed conservatism and nationality prejudices and submit to the teachings of a master who happens to know more about the subject. As we have, temperamentally, more in common with the Saxon race than with the Latin, it follows that we should take the Germans for their thoroughness, and the Austrians for their artistry and amiability, as our teachers. As far as the Austrians are concerned we can always rely on their inherited musical instinct, and whether we made them our teachers or copied them we could not go far wrong. And even if we did submit to foreign teachings, we need not regard it as being undignified: we do not consider it as either when we send our children to foreign schools. It would but help to strengthen the existing bonds of friendship between the nations. I have always regarded music as being more beneficial towards the attainment of a world peace than any of the expensive peace conferences that have yet been imposed upon a long-suffering world. But I am digressing—to return to our subject.

Some very radical changes will have to take place in this country, which will necessitate the, more or less, complete reorganisation of:—

- 1 (a) Our orchestras.
- (b) Orchestral instruments.
- 2 (a) The system of tuition as adopted by the Academy and other Schools and Colleges of music.
- (b) The means of gaining admission as a student to the principal Academy.

Let us begin then by discussing the orchestra, and the instruments used in this country and abroad. Everyone who took the trouble to summarise the Press criticisms of the two concerts given by the Viennese players under the direction of Dr. Wilhelm Furtwängler, must have been struck by their unanimity concerning the strings. One and all agreed that this section of the orchestra was perfect in the fullest sense of the word. This is not to be wondered at since the strings are, for obvious reasons, the most immediately apparent part of an orchestra. I would just like to remind my readers of the unanimity of their bowing, the precision of their attack, and also, how well the first and second violins were balanced. Many of us did not fail to notice their peculiarly rich and luscious tone, far sweeter than in the Berlin strings. It has something of a Latin quality in it, which may be accounted for by the fact that the Austrians lie nearer to Italy than the Germans. It is no exaggeration to say that each member of the orchestra is an artist of the highest order; this, by the by, implies more on the Continent than in England. Each man, no matter what instrument he plays, is thoroughly well versed in musical theory, history, and aesthetics.

Apropos the strings, I wonder how many people noticed that the Viennese double-bass players not only had differently shaped bows but also held them differently to our own players. It might interest these observant people to know that the Viennese academies and conservatoires have more or less standardised a double-bass bow which incorporates the characteristics of the historical Dragonetti bow and the more modern French, or Bottesini bow. The Viennese bow is held under-hand, similar to the Dragonetti method (all the members of the viol family used to be played in this way). In construction, the stick is made slightly convex to the hair, while these are approximately the same distance from the stick at both ends. The nut is rather wider than in the Bottesini, so that when held in the correct position it is necessary to insert the second and third fingers (English fingering) between the stick and the hair. As this method of bowing tends to elicit the tone rather by a sort of 'ripping' or sweeping touch than by pressure only, it follows that the double-basses will be more vigorous in character. I think that this is all to the good; for is not the double-bass the tonal foundation of the modern orchestra? But even when hearing a Beethoven symphony played by a large orchestra in which there are, let us say, ten double-basses, to have heard the Viennese play the wonderful bass passages in the scherzo of the Fifth Symphony is to have heard something never to be forgotten. The depth of tone, and the vigour of their bowing, lends itself admirably to those glorious passages. The double-bass players' happy moments!

The Bottesini bow, as used in England, France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal is, of course, made and held somewhat like that of the violoncello, viz., over-hand. It was, I believe, first used in this country by Bottesini himself, and was afterwards introduced as a more or less permanent feature of the string orchestra in the days of Hans Richter. There is yet another kind of double-bass bow in existence, which is known as the Leipzig, or German bow. In this case, the hair is less distant from the stick at the head than at the nut end. It is also held under-hand. This bow is met with in certain parts of Germany, Hungary and America. It is perhaps interesting to note that four of the New York Philharmonics' ten double-basses were five-stringed, also, I counted ~~six~~ Leipzig bows, the rest being Bottesinis. I consider the strings to be the best part of any British orchestra, but even so, they have yet a lot to learn from the foreigner. I am told that in this country the practice of matching the instruments of a string quartet (for tonal characteristics) has, except in rare instances, become obsolete. This is lamentable news, for surely, it is a fundamental necessity—one might almost say a prime essential—of a good quartet ensemble. Do not the Leners use four Stradivarius instruments? The majority of Continental ensembles attach great importance to this matching of instruments and it would be a good thing for chamber music generally if their British confrères would do the same thing.

Now let us tackle the wood winds—a very frequent source of trouble in many of our orchestras. I will endeavour to explain how we could definitely improve the standard of our playing in this department. In England, we are accustomed to hearing *vibrant* oboes, clarinets, and bassoons, and we have, unfortunately, become quite well acquainted with the various squeaks and squawks that these instruments are capable of producing at the most inopportune moments. I have heard these instruments 'misfire' on numerous occasions, both at the Queen's Hall and at Covent Garden. I should mention that mishaps in the wood wind section of the Vienna Orchestra are of the very rarest occurrence. Three slips a month would be enough to cost a man his job. In this country, more often than not, this section of the orchestra is not only out of tune, within itself, but also with the brass and strings. Wood wind playing is, without doubt, our weakest point. Not with regard to technique, but with regard to tone, intonation, and pitch. I believe that the main causes of this distressing state of affairs can be summed-up as follows:—

1. The method of playing the instruments.
2. The musicians' training, and sensitivity of hearing.
3. The instruments used, and their makers.

To begin with, our method of blowing the wood winds is unsatisfactory. We have adopted the French and Italian system, viz., with a vibrato. It is extremely difficult properly to control the reed when playing with even the slightest of vibratos. It is this circumstance that impairs the purity of tone and intonation in the higher registers. The vibrato of which I speak is, I believe, an absurd endeavour (perhaps unconsciously) on the part of the performer to imitate the vibrato of the string players, and of the human voice. In the case of the former the vibrato of the left hand is nowadays regarded as a fundamental necessity, and is used at all times, except on open strings. If you were to 'slow motion' a good vibrato, it would appear to you as a series of oscillations on both sides of the true tone. (The true tone would alternately be raised and lowered in pitch by just a few vibrations.) In the case of a singer, however, you can often save yourself the trouble and expense of 'slow motioning' their voices. (See the brief, but nevertheless excellent, article on 'Vibrato' in 'Grove'.)

But as for the wood winds, I fail to see any æsthetical or technical reason why they should trespass on the noble and intimate qualities which belong so inseparably and essentially to the strings. A plea that vibrato-playing enhances the quality of tone cannot therefore be upheld. Wind instruments should be played with a tone that is as steady as a rock and as pure as crystal. Played in this manner, they assume a character that is at once impressive, expressive, and convincing. That, briefly, is why vibrato-playing is not tolerated in Vienna. Also, it is with these and other ideals in mind that the Vienna Academy of Music has established what may well be called the finest wood wind school in the world. Those of my readers who can recall the performance of 'Till Eulenspiegel' will remember the remarkable and beautiful playing of the wood winds; particularly of the clarinets. Even that last upward sweep, with the very high top note on the D clarinet, was thrilling to listen to—so perfectly in tune. Although the score of Strauss' work positively bristles with difficult wood wind passages, the Viennese were able to create amongst the audience a very satisfying sense of sureness. We felt that every member of the orchestra possessed an infinite capacity for taking pains; and this is apparent in all their work. They let neither composer, conductor, nor audience down.

This brings me to point 2, and the question of being able to play always in tune. I do really believe that German and Austrian musicians have cultivated a more refined sense of hearing than the English. Also, it appears that a greater majority of them have been endowed by nature with a sense of absolute pitch. In any case, they are undoubtedly more critical towards beauty of tone and accuracy of

pitch. On the Continent a teacher will repeatedly impress upon his pupil the absolute necessity of a beautiful tone. Tone always comes before technique. (*C'est le ton, qui fait la musique*, is an excellent motto for musicians and singers.) A wind instrument student will spend months doing 'Tonbildungsübungen' before he gets on with scales and studies. There is also another point. A Continental musician will take more trouble to be perfectly in tune *right from the very first bar of music*. Abroad, one can always hear the wind players playing-in and warming-up their instruments half an hour or so before the concert or opera starts. (Wind instruments are always flat when cold.) When the conductor raises his baton he knows full well that his orchestra is *already* perfectly in tune. Whereas in England one can nearly always notice an improvement in pitch only as the performance progresses. The way to remedy this slackness is only too obvious.

With regard to point 3, it is time that the makers turned out instruments that are absolutely in tune *when they leave the factory*. This applies chiefly to oboes, clarinets, and bassoons. Flutes are much better off in this respect. It cannot too often be pointed out that there is no economy in buying a cheap instrument. But when one pays between twenty and thirty pounds for a B♭ clarinet of the best British manufacture, and one is given an instrument in which there are at least seven or eight notes out of tune—either sharp, or flat, or both—then one begins to wonder whether these makers are capable of taking their business seriously, or expect the musicians to make up for these deficiencies in pitch by increasing or decreasing the pressure of their lips on the reed whenever the necessity may arise. Needless to say this is a very unsatisfactory state of affairs, and one not met with on the Continent. There, the instrument is tested for accuracy of pitch by a musician of unquestionable capability before ever it leaves the factory. This system has been in vogue for many years in Germany and Austria. If an English musician wanted to order a clarinet from Germany the maker would call in the assistance of the best available talent (usually it is the solo clarinettist of the Municipal or State Opera orchestra) to tune and test the instrument in the workshop, and with an expert workman at hand who can adjust each note on the spot if necessary. As the final tuning of a wood wind instrument is a very delicate task, and calling for an extremely accurate ear, the maker realises that a virtuoso will be most likely to hear any blemishes, should they exist. In this way, for a few extra shillings you get a perfectly tuned instrument. You will find that everything is carried out with characteristic Saxon thoroughness. The co-operation between artist and maker is always evident, the result being—the finest instrument that it is possible to make, at a not exorbitant price. In England and France the makers

have, unfortunately, largely adopted a system of mass production, thus converting a real art into a common trade.

We now come to the brass section, and what I have to say on this will, I venture to think, prove to be of a somewhat controversial nature. However, more good than harm can come of this. According to some critics the quality of the Viennese brass tone was inferior to our own. (The different tonal qualities must have been apparent to anyone possessing a moderately acute ear.) Now although I am not usually of a contrary nature, I do on this occasion strongly repudiate the critics' view, for I consider the Viennese brass to be much nearer the ideal than the English. Needless to say unless I were thoroughly well acquainted with both kinds I would not dare to pass this judgment.

But to come back to brass. I suppose it is largely a matter of taste if one happens to prefer English brass to German. But as our musical ideals are nearly always built upon our own personal tastes, we must be wary not to form those ideals until we are quite sure that they are based on solid foundations. I am convinced that nine out of every ten British concert-goers would say that they prefer British brass. But that is merely because they happen to be on more familiar terms with the tone-colour of our instruments than with foreign ones. It is interesting to note that at least one eminent English conductor has told me that he prefers German brass. It is, of course, very difficult to state in so many words what the 'absolute' brass tone should sound like. Personally, I like a brass tone that sounds like brass, and not like a blend of soft brass and low wood wind. The saxophone and sarrusophone families supply this requirement. Let it not be said that it is immaterial on what instruments we play as long as we play them well. Every conductor worthy of the name knows full well that masters like Beethoven, Schubert and Wagner possessed an extraordinary sense of tone-colour. Their music was conceived for instruments possessing very definite tone-characteristics. Therefore, we should endeavour to adhere as much as possible to the composers' ideals.

It is interesting to reflect that our concert programmes contain far more Anglo-Saxon, Teutonic, Magyar, Slav and Scandinavian music than Italian or French. The latter are confined mostly to opera. Does it not follow then that we should do well to use instruments with German characteristics? This question is surely rather intriguing. I might add that the instruments used in Germany, Austria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia are all, more or less, identical. But they differ very considerably from those used in England and the Latin countries, to tone-colour bore, design of the valves (pistons or ventils) and the kind of mouthpiece used. Here

again, England has copied French models. It is these Latin instruments that have that characteristically mellow, soft, and sometimes muffled tone that is so unbrass-like, particularly in the horns. The constructional points which are mainly responsible for the difference in tone are the wider bores and mouthpieces of the German instruments. I should imagine that it is easier to play on French and English instruments because of the narrower bore. Which is perhaps the reason why these instruments are favoured here.

On the other hand, it is interesting to note that the slide piston, notwithstanding its comparative simplicity, has never been able to displace the more complicated and delicate rotary valve, as used throughout Central Europe. Owing to its construction the rotary valve is capable of a much quicker and cleaner cut-off between notes, and also, a very close shake is possible with it. While desiring a brass-like tone from trumpets, horns and trombones, it does not necessarily follow that they must sound raucous or blatant. One can usually hear this kind of noise on pier-heads and in cinemas. As everybody knows who went to the Queen's Hall on April 29, the Viennese can play the most intense *fortissimi* as well as the most tender and soothing *pianissimi*, without once getting unmusical or out of tune. From the musicians' point of view, the vastness and unfamiliar acoustics of the Albert Hall proved very trying. They told me, before the concert, that they were hardly being given a fair chance to 'put themselves across.' But in the greater intimacy of the smaller hall they were fully able to prove their worth. Never shall I be able to forget the majesty and impressiveness of the chorales as delivered on the brass in the Bruckner Symphony. It is inconceivable that this symphony could ever have been played better. Indeed, during the interval when I told two players of the orchestra that they had certainly surpassed themselves on that occasion, they replied that they were determined to do so, if only because they were playing in a foreign country and eager to gain the approval of audience and critics. They were especially anxious to know how the Bruckner would please.

While on the subject of brass, I should like to say what a pity it is that we are rapidly displacing the real trumpet from the orchestra by an instrument that is half trumpet and half cornet. This instrument is more flexible and easier to play than the trumpet, but in using it one sacrifices the characteristic brilliancy of the latter. Also, I have noticed a tendency with brass players in this country to vibrate slightly on long notes. This is not permissible in first-class orchestras in Germany and Austria, where it is looked upon as being very cheap. What I have already said in this respect about the wood winds applies equally well to all the brass instruments.

In conclusion, I would suggest that we begin the musical reformation of this country—which surely is overdue—by devoting all our energies and resources to the foundation and organisation of a new school of music, in which the principal professorships be given to Austrian and German teachers of established reputation and unquestionable capability. It is conceivable that they could imbue our native talent with a deeper understanding of the real value of music in respect to our daily lives. It is, furthermore, more than probable that they could teach us to use our instruments in a way that would be a revelation to many. If these foreign artists could be induced to play in our leading orchestras, the advantages accruing from such a union could not be over-estimated. It is not too much to say that the standard of our orchestral playing would improve so swiftly that a new impetus would be given to musical activities in this country within a very short space of time; in fact, a musical renaissance would be inevitable. It is far more important for us to possess this one new school of music than any number of mediocre orchestras and various opera schemes that are so slow in materialising. With the aid of one really good orchestra the confidence of the general public could soon be gained. This, of course, would be necessary, if at a later date it were possible to found a National Opera.

I suggest, therefore, that a committee be formed, consisting of the leading musical authorities and critics in this country, to investigate my proposition, and prove or disprove what I have said.

HENRY WELSH.

[This article was written before the advent of the B.B.C. Orchestra, and before the L.S.O. put themselves under a foreign conductor.—Ed.]

THE ALL-BRASS ENSEMBLE

ALTHOUGH the serious musician may find much to deplore in certain aspects of the current 'popularisation' of music—that is, in methods which tend to lower the dignity of the art, or which create the impression that the acquisition of musical culture is a much more simple matter than it actually is—he cannot legitimately object to a sane and healthily democratic outlook where musical matters are concerned. On the contrary, the abandonment of the high-horse attitude is conducive to a more vital, a more rational artistic development; nor need it be inconsistent with the maintenance of a true and necessary æsthetic dignity. One need have no misgiving, therefore, in advancing discussion of a musical interest which is, despite a steadily growing artistic significance, a frankly popular one—that of the all-brass ensemble, known throughout the kingdom, with characteristic British forthrightness, as the plain 'brass band.'

The conditions under which the wind ensembles of this country have developed are peculiar. Ignored by the vast majority of cultivated musicians, they have taken firm root among one class of amateurs whose livelihood depends upon the factories, yards, and collieries of the industrial centres. There are few firms of size and importance, particularly in the Northern counties, which have not produced a wind combination from among their employees; there are few towns or villages without their 'subscription bands,' recruited from men engaged in local industries. At the outset, these bands consisted of extraordinarily haphazard collections of instruments. In 1818, the famous Besses o' th' Barn Band included clarinets, piccolo, keyed bugle, trumpet, French horns, bass horns, trombone, and drums. The application of the valve principle to brass instruments, with the subsequent invention of the saxhorn group, later brought about a systemisation of the wind ensembles, which finally became sifted down into two main compartments—the military band and the all-brass band. The former retains a complement of wood-wind and saxophones in addition to cornets, euphonium, bombardons, and the usual brass choir of the orchestra; the latter now consists, with the exception of tenor and bass slide trombones, of instruments of the saxhorn type, ranging in compass from soprano to contra-bass.⁽¹⁾

(1) The full brass band score normally includes parts for twenty-four instruments: Soprano (E flat) cornet; 'solo' cornet in B flat; six cornets in B flat (second and third parts); 'repiano' cornet in B flat; flügelhorn in B flat; three tenor horns in E flat; two baritones in B flat; two tenor trombones and bass trombone; two euphoniums in B flat; two bombardons in E flat; two bombardons (contra-bass) in B flat. Percussion is sometimes added.

Apart from the large regimental bands, both the military and the brass combinations—especially the latter, which is by far the more common medium of the two, doubtless on account of the comparative ease with which the technique of its instruments may be mastered—have developed along rigidly sectarian lines. It is remarkable how completely removed from accepted musical activity the development of the brass ensemble has been, notwithstanding its enormous scope. As Mr. Hubert Foss recently wrote, 'It is extraordinary how aloof from that sphere [the world of the brass band] our central musical life has kept itself.'⁽²⁾

This isolation from the main channels of musical development has undoubtedly had a deleterious effect, both directly and indirectly, upon the artistic welfare of the wind ensembles. Existing purely in spheres of their own, under the control of a body of operators influenced only at remote points by the broader standards of musical culture, the wind ensembles have been compelled to struggle bitterly before even their potentialities as artistic factors could be recognised. Even the effects of a growing musical ambition have for many years retarded the very progress they were meant to foster. This ambition, which manifested itself in a desire for a higher standard of music to perform, could only lead, in the absence of musicianly interest and guidance, to an indiscriminating raid upon the standard classics, often with disastrous results. The demerits of the whole principle of transcription require no emphasis; it need only be said that grotesqueries such as arrangements of the 'Unfinished' symphony for brass band—especially when performed by conductors with more enthusiasm than discretion—were poor recommendations to the sympathy of the serious musician.

Not least among the undesirable effects of this widespread practice of transcribing orchestral music was the heavy advantage given to the military combination. What measure of attention was afforded to the wind ensembles by the serious music lover inevitably created a bias in favour of the military band—which, by virtue of its choir of woodwind and orchestral brass, can produce a fairly satisfactory imitation of orchestral effects—although it is definitely inferior to the all-brass ensemble as a musical medium. The brass band is entirely distinct from the orchestra, and, when engaged in playing music originally conceived in orchestral terms, it is left not only struggling hopelessly with a completely foreign tongue, but failing to convey more than

(2) There are innumerable brass bands in the United Kingdom. A census taken in 1895 produced the astounding figure of 40,000. There is a vast and well-organised competitive festival movement; the annual national festival at the Crystal Palace regularly brings nearly two hundred bands from all parts of the country. Yet the new *Grove* is completely silent on the matter, save for glancing references in articles on kindred subjects.

a remote hint of its own rich and noble dialect. The military band is essentially hybrid: a compromise between the orchestra and the all-brass band. The brass band is a pure musical instrument with a pronounced individuality of its own.

Brass band tone is quite different from that of the orchestral brass. If it is more sombre in hue, it is no less dignified and impressive, and is capable of gradation from the brilliant and incisive to the veiled and smooth. The lack of colour so frequently imputed to the brass band is, in point of fact, less an indictment of the medium itself than a condemnation of the unimaginative scoring adopted by the majority of the 'arrangers' who for so long have held the fate of the brass ensemble in their incompetent hands. Naturally, the vivid contrasts of the orchestra are not to be matched in a palette consisting of some half-dozen closely related qualities of tone; but the subtle distinctions of shade between the timbre of the B flat and E flat cornets, cornet and flügel, tenor horn and baritone, baritone and euphonium, and so forth, not to mention the intermediary colours produced by skilful muting, offer scope for extraordinary tonal beauty and variety. When composers of genius, such as Elgar and Holst, are persuaded to apply their musicianship to the brass band, some of these neglected possibilities are revealed, to the stimulation—and probably the astonishment—of the cultivated listener. So distinguished a critic as Mr. Eric Blom, writing apropos performances of Elgar's *Severn Suite* for Brass Band, was recently moved to speak of the 'extreme beauty and resourcefulness of the brass band.' The potentialities of the medium are, indeed, immense.

That some of the latent possibilities of the brass ensemble have been revealed in original music recently written specifically for the medium has been due to the imagination and enterprise of a small coterie—among whom must be honourably mentioned the musical directors of the Crystal Palace festivals—who have realised the necessity of securing the co-operation of distinguished composers. This step has been instrumental not only in establishing a far higher standard where the intrinsic worth of original brass music, *quâ* music, is concerned, but in bringing into the movement musicians whose breadth of experience has enabled them to make a penetrative survey of the peculiar characteristics, the scope and the limitations, of the new instrument placed in their hands. The concrete result of this policy has been the production of brass band works which not only display fresh ingenuities in the actual scoring—including exploitation of instruments hitherto kept strictly in the background—but which in entire conception are ideally suited to the medium. Among the British composers who have scored brass band music are Elgar, Holst, Bantock, Percy Fletcher and Cyril Jenkins; and even within the small

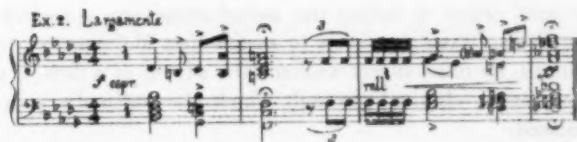
range of the existing literature of first-rate brass music, it has been adequately established that there are many individual styles which can be successfully adapted to the peculiar technique of the medium.

The principal factor in the success of the new brass music has been the true recognition of limitations—not so much the restrictions of technical capacity which must obviously create boundaries for the composer, but the artistic inadaptability of the brass ensemble to particular modes of musical thought and expression. The failure to distinguish between what is technically possible and what is artistically justifiable has led many 'arrangers' of brass music astray, even though some of them have displayed a nice appreciation of the felicities of brass scoring as such. Arrangements of orchestral works by Mozart are among the notorious examples of ill-considered transcription for the brass band.

It has been demonstrated, however, that what might be termed the spiritual limitations of the brass ensemble are by no means severe. Penetrative study of the medium by composers of insight and skill has produced music which, though at all times characteristic of the brass, covers a broad range of mood and atmosphere. Moreover, the diatonic, the highly chromatic, and even the modal idioms have been successfully applied to the brass band by eminent composers. Both the noble opening of Elgar's *Severn Suite* for Brass Band, op. 87 (1930):



and the striking conclusion of Bantock's *Oriental Rhapsody* for Brass (1930):



are admirably adapted to performance by concerted instruments of the type employed in the present-day brass band.

The infinite variety of the brass—which is adequately illustrated throughout the course of both works from which the foregoing extracts have been culled—may be further hinted at by the following, the second of which is a particularly effective example of scoring :

Ex 3 *Allergo* Nibel (*Horseshoe Suite*) 1928
 1st Cornet (solo) 2nd Cornet Baritone Euphonium
 p

Ex 4 *Piastrato* Cyril Jenkins (*Victory*) 1922
 1st Cornet (solo) 2nd Cornet Baritone Euphonium
 p

It is indeed singular that the artistic possibilities of the brass band have not been discovered earlier.

Where actual execution is concerned, the general level of performance among brass bands is, of course, extremely variable. The proportion of combinations which attain a high degree of technical skill is none the less an encouraging one; and the good influence of the new music must inevitably stimulate a higher regard for pure artistic considerations, and assist in the establishment of more potent æsthetic ideals. In fine, the cult of the British working-men's bands and the central musical activities of the country at last show signs of merging into a common interest; and a new field of operations is therefore opening out for composers and musicians in general.

That a vast amount of popular interest is already centred in the brass band movement is a stimulating fact. However much the musician may object to taking the sacred mountain of his art to the Mahomet in the street, or even to persuading Mahomet to travel to the mountain, he must surely welcome the advent of a new, if possibly more democratic, channel through which the authentic gospel may be proclaimed.

J. H. ELLIOT.

BELA BARTOK

TEN years ago Bartók's music was known outside his own country only to a few students of modern music. To-day Béla Bartók is generally recognised to be one of the most promising and competent of contemporary composers. Though he had played groups of his pianoforte pieces in England, and visiting artists had performed his string quartets and violin sonatas, Bartók's music did not reach the general public until nearly four years ago, when the British Broadcasting Corporation performed his Piano Concerto. This work created something of a sensation. With commendable courage, the B.B.C. continued to broadcast Bartók's music in the face of that peculiarly intense hostile criticism with which 'modern' art is greeted in this country. Thus, many people have heard Bartók, willingly or unwillingly, in the concert hall or by wireless. Some, while being interested in his music, have found it a little difficult to understand. This article may elucidate certain aspects of Bartók's work.

It is perhaps unfortunate that the musical public in England should have become first acquainted with Bartók's later style—the style of his Third and Fourth String Quartets, Two Violin Sonatas, Piano Concerto, and Violin Rhapsody, all of which have been written since 1921. It has been impressed upon audiences that Bartók reflects the passionate nature of Hungarian folk-music. It must be quite clear, however, that the simplicity and straightforwardness associated with folk-music are conspicuously absent in the above works. Bartók's later style has developed out of Hungarian folk-music, and in order to understand it we must examine his early compositions. His sets of Pianoforte Pieces, which are arrangements of folk-tunes, serve our purpose excellently.

Here is a simple folk-tune from one of the 'Fourteen Bagatelles' (1908):—



The novelty, or strangeness, of this music is due to the simplicity of the accompaniment rather than to the tune itself. It is the accompaniment that gives the tune its non-Western-European air. The tune may be Hungarian, but the music has no resemblance whatever to Brahms' Hungarian Dances and Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies. Bartók is evidently treating Hungarian music in another way. His harmonic treatment accounts partly for the difference, but there are more fundamental reasons. The folk-tunes Brahms and Liszt used are not Hungarian, but Zigane; the gypsies are a foreign race living in Hungary.⁽¹⁾ Bartók wished to use pure Hungarian folk melos. He found that many of the Hungarian tunes had borrowed foreign characteristics—Rumanian, Czech, Zigane, and Bohemian. Further, he found it necessary to distinguish between ancient tunes, which had been handed down to the present day, and modern tunes written during the last century.⁽²⁾ Bartók has investigated the whole subject

(1) The differences between Zigane and Magyar music are chiefly rhythmic and modal: in Brahms 'Hungarian Dances,' for example, the tempo alternates suddenly between *moderato* and *vivo*; in Bartók's Hungarian dance music the tempo gradually increases from *allegro* to *vivacissimo*. But the most striking difference between their music is the use of modes. Whereas Brahms and Liszt preferred to transcribe the Zigane music into the customary major and minor European scales (i.e., the Ionian or 'secular' mode), Bartók has preserved intact the modal peculiarities of pure Magyar music.

(2) Without treating the subject in detail, it may be of interest to observe a few characteristics of this folk-music. Bartók has classified it roughly under three heads:—

(1) Older melodies which have been handed down from generation to generation. Most of these old tunes had never been written down before Bartók transcribed them from phonograph records. They are nearly always distinguished by a *parlando-rubato* tempo, and are written in various modes—the Aeolian and Dorian in Hungary, the Mixolydian in Slovakia, while the Rumanian modes depend upon the fourth note of the scale, which determines its major or minor direction.

(2) Newer melodies which have arisen during the last century. The Hungarian and Slovak tunes are distinguished by their *tempo giusto*, the Rumanian by a *parlando-rubato*. The Slovak melodies are preponderantly in the Lydian mode, while the Hungarian use the Aeolian, Dorian, and Mixolydian, but never the Lydian.

(3) Melodies of various characteristics not peculiar to the particular districts in which they have been found, but showing a fusion of two or more districts. Thus the Slovak melodies show influences of Hungarian tunes and rhythms; the modern Rumanian tunes are mostly instrumental; and the modern Hungarian folk-tunes show a great variety of non-Hungarian characteristics, but they are generally written in a *tempo giusto* in a syncopated 2/4 metre.

The metre, as well as the rhythmic idiosyncrasies, of the folk-songs are often conditioned by the word-metres. Thus the Hungarian folk-song verses are made up of four-lined 8, 11, or 12 syllabled lines; the Slovak by four-lined six-syllabled lines; and the Rumanian of three-lined or four-lined eight-syllabled lines.

with scientific thoroughness and accuracy. He did not wish to select certain folk-tunes because they were picturesque, and then incorporate them into an accepted 'civilised' Western-European musical style. He wanted to examine the characteristics of pure Hungarian folk-melody, and to maintain these characteristics without any disguise. Brahms and Liszt moulded the folk-melodies to suit their own styles: Bartók moulds his style to suit the Hungarian folk-tunes. It is the rapid development of this style within the last ten years that has won for Bartók an exceptional place in contemporary music.

Bartók's melody is of supreme importance. From the various forms of folk-melody, conditioned in many cases by word-metres, he has selected three main types. The first is the short four- or eight-bar tune, which lends itself to repetition: the tune may be varied either by syncopation of the accompaniment, or by change of stress of the notes forming the melody. Such tunes are as characteristic of Russian as of Hungarian music, and Stravinsky has made them familiar in Western Europe. But whereas his tunes are invariably diatonic, Bartók's are usually chromatic or modal. In the following example it will be seen that the melody rises chromatically from B \sharp to E \sharp , and descends from G \sharp to B \flat .



The second type of melody is modal in character. It is this modal quality in Bartók's music that is apt to mislead us most when listening to it. Our ears are so accustomed to tunes based on diatonic scales that they involuntarily expect diatonic resolutions. Our musical subconsciousness is constantly jarred by the modal sequences inherent in Bartók's music. The difference between a tune by Bartók and a tune normal to our ears is very slight, but it is fundamental. The

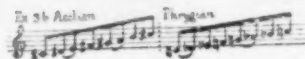
following example shows the opening of the first of the 'Fourteen Bagatelles':—



We see here a juxtaposition of two scales:—



They may be transposed into the Aeolian and Phrygian modes, starting on C# and C# respectively:—

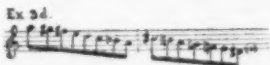


The difference of 'key' serves to emphasise the difference of mode, but it also illustrates a favourite device of Bartók. By combining the two scales, and omitting enharmonic notes, we have the following ten-tone scale:—



Such fantastic-looking scales are not uncommon in Asiatic music, and it must be borne in mind that the Magyars are of Asiatic origin. Their language, as well as their music, show remarkably little trace of European influences. A further example of a ten-tone scale is found in Bartók's *Allegro Barbaro*; the scale here used is a compound of C major and F# major-minor—the right hand part being written in

C major, while the left hand part uses what we call C \sharp minor. Considered in the light of Bartók's ten-tone scale, the resulting harmonic 'clashes' are both logical and justified. As a final instance we may quote the opening of the Second Violin Sonata (see Ex. 6) where the following scales are used :—



The simultaneous playing of these two scales, or these two parts of this twelve-tone (chromatic) scale, explains the harmonisation of bar 9, since Bartók has constructed the scales thus :—



Two such simple melodic strands, as in Ex. 3, can be easily assimilated. Bartók is more difficult to understand when he combines three or four modal tunes. The following example is taken from the Piano Concerto, and it will be seen that the national Hungarian character of the tunes has been superseded by a distinctly personal style.



The third type of melody is the rhapsodical, by which I mean a flowing and 'growing' melody, as distinct from the short, self-contained four- or eight-bar tune, previously mentioned. The opening movement to each of the first two string quartets well

illustrates this type. We quote the opening of the First String Quartet :—

Ex 43. Lento (♩ = 50)

Violin I (Va. I) and Violin II (Va. II) parts are shown, along with Viola and Cello parts. The tempo is marked *Lento* (♩ = 50). The dynamics include *p* and *molto espress.*

These two melodic lines are remarkable in that they touch almost every note of the chromatic scale within a compass of nearly two octaves. Though there is not an interval in either strand that would not be quite intelligible to us in, say, a Straussian context, the melodic thought at first does not appear to us as normal, nor even coherent. The complete context as given is Bartók's message, and it must be read as a whole to be understood. Gradually we are led to form a different conception of musical phraseology, and we come to the conclusion that Bartók describes something previously outside our experience of music.

An understanding of a relatively simple phrase, such as the above example, which Bartók wrote in 1908, prepares us for the more elusive significance of his later work. In the Second Violin Sonata, written in 1922, Bartók has extended the rhapsodic type of melody. He has re-created the fantastic improvisations of village fiddlers whose art is still very much alive in Hungary. In England this form of folk-music is nearly extinct, but we have memories of fiddlers, and particularly of bagpipe players, who developed an almost incredible virtuosity. A series of trills, arabesques, and grace notes were crowded into a single beat: the folk-tune was lavishly decorated. This music depends for effect very largely upon the skill and imagination of the artist-executant, and it is significant that Bartók has written his Two Violin Sonatas and his Violin Rhapsody for Jelli d'Arányi and Josef Szigeti respectively. They know exactly how to bring to life the intricate decorations, how to regulate the frequent and subtle gradations of tempo, and, above all, how to suggest a flowing movement in the melody which is yet fascinatingly syncopated. The

following example will give some idea of this rhapsodic improvisation, which is becoming increasingly important in Bartók's music. We quote the opening of the Second Violin Sonata. Note Bartók's detailed instructions regarding expression and tempo:—

Ex 5.

Molto Moderato (♩ = 116) *poco rall.* *a tempo*

mf capr. *dim. calando* *pp* *p*

ritard. *mf a tempo* *p rit.*

a tempo (piu vivo) (♩ = 133) *f mf rall.* *p dolc.* *piu p* *poco rall.*

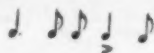
Pieno mosso (♩ = 78) ritard. *a tempo (♩ = 118)* *etc.*

The important part Bartók's melody plays in his music cannot be over-estimated. We cannot, however, ignore his rhythm and harmony. Both are stamped with his individuality: both have pursued a parallel development with his melos—i.e., a development from the national to the individual, which is equivalent to the universal.

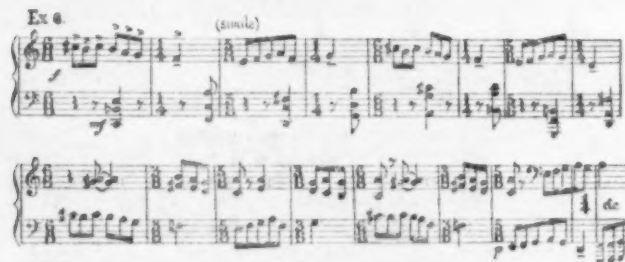
Rhythm is very marked in Bartók's music. It differs essentially from Stravinsky's, which is complete in itself and is written apart from the melos. Bartók's rhythm emanates from the nature of the folk-melodies; it is largely conditioned by their characteristics. A typical rhythmic characteristic of Hungarian folk-music is a quaver

followed by a crotchet. Bartók uses this rhythm in almost every one of his compositions. We can see it in Exx. 2, 3, 4 and 5. The Four String Quartets make abundant use of it, as well as this rhythmic figure, also prevalent in Hungarian folk-tunes—

Ex 5a.



Bartók also extensively employs ostinato figures. The *Allegro*



Barbaro, the Two Orchestral Suites, the Piano Sonata, the Violin Sonatas, and the Piano Concerto, as well as the allegro movements of the String Quartets, furnish ample evidence of insistent rhythms.⁽³⁾ These ostinato figures sometimes give the impression of a drone, and it is possible that Bartók has in mind a Hungarian instrument corresponding to the bag-pipes, the *duda*, for example, or one that is used as a 'thrumming' accompaniment. Bartók's ostinato figures carry the music along with great energy. It gathers impetus. Bartók then shatters the metre into pieces which fly about in all directions. A *rallentando* slackens the tempo until a fresh rhythmic figure speeds up the music again. In all his major works Bartók frequently alters the tempo. As a general rule his allegro movements tend to increase in speed until a frenzied explosion terminates their hectic career. It may not be too fanciful to imagine Bartók's music as representing the traditional dances executed by a band of Hungarian peasants. Their persistent rhythmic stamping

(3) Insistent rhythm, in Bartók's sense, is opposed to the Tautonic conception of rhythm, and differs markedly from rhythm as used by Honegger, Stravinsky, Milhaud, Prokofiev and others. Without treating in detail the subject of metre and rhythm, we may say generally that Bartók's ostinato figures are part of the metrical structure, whereas the music of the Russian school and Honegger emphasises the liberties of rhythm apart from any metrical framework. We can see a difference between these approaches to rhythmic energy by comparing Bartók's music and 'Le Sacre du Printemps' with 'Les Noces' and 'Rugby.'

*As the writer pointed out in a previous article, 'Le Sacre' can be regarded as a work apart from Stravinsky's opera.

of feet and clapping of hands form a solid accompaniment to the intricate convolutions of the dance. Each figure is developed to a climax, and the final figure ends in a whirl of excitement.

It may be useful to describe one or two characteristics of Bartók's harmony. It will be noticed in Ex. 2 that the accompaniment is simply an ostinato figure of major seconds. Major seconds seem to be an obsession with Bartók: they occur countless times in all his compositions, and are generally grouped in sets of four quavers, as in Ex. 2. In the second movement of the Second String Quartet the first violin repeats octave E while the second violin repeats octave D. We thus have two major seconds an octave apart, as well as a seventh (E to D) and a ninth (D to E). In Bartók's later works we find a great number of repeated augmented sevenths and diminished ninths. These intervals make for dissonance, and the Violin Sonatas and Piano Concerto especially have been criticised on that score. But these intervals seem to be an integral part of Bartók's musical speech, rather than any wish to appear 'ultra-modern,' or *outré*. The seconds and ninths of Bartók are as much a part of his harmonic scheme as the thirds and sixths of Brahms, the fourths of Skryabin, and the sevenths of Ravel and Delius.

As a final example of Bartók's work we may quote a short extract from the Piano Sonata (1926). It shows the influence Hungarian folk-music has had upon the formation of Bartók's own melodic speech. The tune we quote is actually a variation of a folk-tune stated earlier in the Sonata, but it can be seen that Bartók is the master, not the slave, of the folk-tunes he incorporates in his work. He retains the simplicity of folk-music when he is treating folk-tunes, though he does not hesitate to make full use of the most modern harmony—harmony, moreover, that derives from Strauss and Schönberg, however transfused it may be ultimately with Bartók's own idiom. Bartók's harmonic complexity does not lead to those involved and rather artificial settings of folk-tunes for which Goossens and Bax (e.g., 'A Hill Tune') are sometimes responsible. In *method* Bartók may perhaps be compared with Vaughan Williams, since in their major works they have both assimilated the folk-music of their respective countries to such an extent that while their style is directly influenced by folk-music it is yet distinctly personal. In *treatment*, however, Bartók and Vaughan Williams are widely dissimilar: Vaughan Williams preserves, shall we say, a more conservative attitude, Bartók a decidedly radical one. It is Bartók's degree of radicalness that measures the difference between his treatment of folk-music and that of the majority of contemporary folk-music 'arrangers.' For all his 'ultra-modern' treatment, Bartók has demonstrated that the charm of folk-music is not obscured, but is often enhanced, by modern harmonisation.

Bartók's music can never be confused with anyone else's. Bartók has joined no modern movement: there is no Bartók 'school.' His music is individual, yet his style is catholic. Many of his pianoforte pieces are perfect examples of the miniature: on the other hand his orchestral compositions stand out in modern music by reason of the fullness of their development. He has written melodies which are so constructed as to render superfluous a detailed harmonic accompaniment; yet he is capable of writing a most elaborate polyphonic texture, as well as dynamic chord-writing of great force and dissonance. Whichever style he adopts he makes peculiarly his own: he adapts it to the matter in hand, and when that requires a totally different treatment he does not hesitate to change his style accordingly. (Compare the Piano Concerto with the Fourth String Quartet.) The result is not a mixture of styles, but a single style, controlled by his personality, which can withstand outside influences for the good reason that it is not too refined and exclusive to reject them.

What distinguishes Bartók from the host of other modern composers whose work is clever and interesting, though seemingly transitory, is that he wastes nothing. Every note of his music means something: it is there for a purpose and for a *musical* purpose.⁽⁴⁾ It is this purely musical quality in Bartók that is so conspicuous. He is not primarily concerned with atonality, quarter-tonality, neoclassicism, orchestral effects, nor with the rhythmic seductions of jazz and machinery. His music is neither intellectual nor naïve. In a word, Bartók *thinks* in sound; he does not *manufacture* sound. To think in terms of music as we think in terms of our native language, to think unconsciously and yet to express ourselves convincingly, is a gift that few possess, but which Bartók does possess. We associate this gift perhaps particularly with Beethoven, and it is remarkable to note that Bartók resembles Beethoven more closely with each succeeding work.

Bartók's use of Development, as Beethoven and Brahms understood it, is almost unique in 'ultra-modern' music. In this respect Bartók is the antithesis of Stravinsky, Hindemith, Honegger, and others. In Bartók's later works especially, his subjects are first sketched in and subsequently developed into themes which are again enlarged. His driving rhythms and reiterated chords and

(4) Every note of Bartók's music seems to be written for a *musical* purpose, as distinct from an *intellectual* or extra-musical purpose. For instance, Schönberg's music so often consists of 'note-series' whose *raison d'être* seems to be a solution of a mathematical problem: Stravinsky's music has an extra-musical purpose—e.g., orchestral effects, rhythmic eccentricity, up-to-dateness (neoclassicism): the music of Honegger, Poulenc, Ravel, Hindemith, etc., seems to me to be written for the purpose of solving some particular technical problem, or of expressing some particular attitude towards 'modern' musical thought. I feel about Bartók's music that it approaches a far more universal attitude—it happens to be 'modern,' but it is not concerned with any modern schools.

phrases, leading into a further statement of the original theme, remind us of Beethoven's music. However different in scope and achievement Beethoven and Bartók may be, the similarity of method is striking, especially since the general trend of contemporary music has led away from Beethoven. That Bartók's style is comparable with Beethoven's may seem strange to those who think of Bartók as a passionately national composer. But, as we have said, Bartók has been greatly modifying the Hungarian characteristics of his music. The Hungarian idiom is still present, but it has been subdued by Bartók's personality and has been adapted to the requirements of symphonic forms.

Bartók has now arrived at an interesting stage. He is one of the very few contemporary composers whom we can confidently expect to develop progressively. His Two Violin Sonatas, the Piano Concerto, the Violin Rhapsody, and the Third and Fourth String Quartets are splendid achievements. We look forward to the completed pantomime, 'The Wonderful Mandarin.' Since 1921 Bartók's work has shown an increasing confidence and ability. From 1931 onwards Bartók's expression should be mature. Forty years hence it seems not unlikely that Béla Bartók will be regarded as the first great composer of the twentieth century.

Béla Bartók was born on March 25, 1881. His published works include:—*Rhapsody for Piano* (1904); *Burlesque for Orchestra* (1904); *First and Second Suites for Orchestra* (1905-1907); and several pieces for pianoforte solo, based on folk-tunes.

First String Quartet, opus 7 (1906); *Fourteen Bagatelles for Piano* (1906); *Ten Easy Piano Pieces* (1908); several sets of piano pieces, including the *Quatre Nénies* (1910), *Trois Burlesques*, *Deux Elégies*, the *Esquisses*, opus 9, and four volumes of *Children's Pieces*: *Deux Images* and *Quatre Morceaux* for Orchestra (1910); and the opera, 'Duke Bluebeard's Castle,' opus 11 (1910). The pantomime, 'The Wooden Prince,' was begun at this time, but was not performed until 1917.

Piano Suite, opus 14; *Five Songs*, opus 16; and the *Second String Quartet*, opus 17 (1915-1917). A second pantomime 'The Wonderful Mandarin,' was sketched out and partly written. The War interrupted composition on a large scale.

Sonatine for Piano (1919); *Improvisations for Piano* (1920); *First Violin Sonata* (1921); *Second Violin Sonata* (1922); *Dance Suite for Piano* (1923); *Sonata for Piano* (1926); *Third String Quartet* (1926); *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* (1927); *Fourth String Quartet* (1928); *Rhapsody for Violin and Orchestra* (1929).

Bartók's collections of folk-tunes, most of which remain unpublished, include 200 Arabian, 2,700 Hungarian, and 3,500 Rumanian.

ARTHUR G. BROWNE.

[Mr. Browne's name was unfortunately misprinted in the October number—Ed.]

THE CALIPH OF VIENNA : DR. RICHARD STRAUSS, MUSICIAN

DR. RICHARD STRAUSS is the Caliph, the Sultan, the High Priest of modern music.

'Thirty years ago I was regarded as a rebel,' he has said to me, flashing that queer little smile which seems so lost in his big face, 'but to-day, as you see, I have lived to find myself a classic.'

The great composer has gone the way of all radicals. What Continental, starting upon the benches of the Left, has not inevitably trended, with power and the consciousness of vested authority, toward conservatism and a regal panoply of his own? Just as there was once a time when d'Annunzio sat in the café and drew life from the rough, though now he lives retired in his castle and leads the life of a mad prince, so too there was once a time when Richard Strauss, still a timid, naïve, Munich lad, heard his first festival chorus performed at a gymnasium concert, and, later, conducted his own opus 14 with an orchestra of thirteen wind instruments. But that was years ago. Now Richard Strauss, like the author of *La Citta Morta*, has survived to see his own apotheosis. He plays a rôle: he is Goethe at Weimar . . . Wagner at Bayreuth!

At heart Strauss is a simple man, as most musicians are, yet events and persons have conspired to mask this fundamental reality.

The struggle among German cities to have and to hold Dr. Richard Strauss has been spectacular and strenuous. It is not merely a rivalry of honour. Any chamber of commerce or *syndicat d'initiative* might well take part. For where Richard Strauss lives, giving regular series of public appearances as conductor or as composer, there is an assured operatic season and an attraction for tourists not surpassed even by Oberammergau and Salzburg.

The temperamental Strauss has many times threatened to leave Vienna permanently for Berlin or for Dresden. It is to bind him in his place that the Government of Austria, following the example of the Italians with their poet, has given him magnificent grounds cut from the park of the Imperial Belvedere, laid out by Prince Eugene of Savoy, and last held, up till the tragedy of Serajevo, by the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. In return for his rare gardens and for the unparalleled site of his villa just above that on which Canaletto set up his easel two centuries ago when he painted his famous oils of

the lower, inner city, Strauss has agreed to live in Vienna some four months every year, directing twenty or more operas, and lending to the city the prestige of his name. Vienna is, indeed, exploiting a great musical talent as a metropolitan asset.

And Strauss is happy. He has his garden, his lake, his trees—and his family.

Frau Strauss must enter into any discussion of her husband's music. She not only aids in its making. She has been Strauss' muse and model in the 'Symphonia Domestica' and in 'Intermezzo.' All the drole episodes at which Strauss hints in words and harmony she has suggested. She has even been known to hold up one of his dinner parties, in order to search for the place-cards which she must have somewhere 'saved over from the last time.' Too categorical a hostess to think of letting her guests go in to table without having it set properly for them, she is at the same time too good a manager to make new favours when the old ones are just under her hand, 'just tucked away.'

And so Frau Strauss is the efficient manager of the genius, her husband. She had made her own career before she started helping him to make his. She was already a successful singer in the Munich *Oper* when his early work as a conductor took him back to his native city and led to their meeting. Of good family, she had been steeped in the Prussian military tradition. Her father was a general. It is she who has brought into Strauss' dreamy life an element of order almost fanatic in its absolutism and tyranny. It is she who dictates the purification of all guests before his door; it is she who keeps him in form as if he were a boxer.

There was a party one night two years ago at the Kaiser Bar. 'Come on, Maestro, you must dance with us!' cried one of the youngest, prettiest matrons of the party. 'I'd love to . . . I want to . . . but I don't dare!' Richard Strauss half glanced in the direction of his trainer. . . . 'I'm not allowed.' And the great master's huge block cheeks flamed red with embarrassment. He may rebel, but he is too sane a creator long to think of disregarding his rules. As he grows older they can be relaxed, yet they are always there, controlling even his hours of recreation. There has certainly been more Richard Strauss written because of the existence of Frau Strauss than ever there would have been without her. 'Richard,' she is reported to say to him when the mood is backward and he wanders absently about in everybody's way. 'Richard, jetzt gehst komponieren!' And this order to compose, though it may at times have forced and thinned his inspiration, has been beyond measure productive. Strauss was born in 1864. He is sixty-six years

old. And yet he has told me, 'I still compose as I always did, except that a distinction must be made between the work of my early days and my work now. Then I was composing a different type of music, tone poems, concertos, program pieces, the stuff that forms my first manner; but I turned from the lyric to the operatic. Opera composition is not done in a spurt of temperament. After one has hit upon one's main themes, there follows real physical labour. I must work over the development of a motif again and again, keeping no hours, till the every little line is adjusted. When I am writing an opera I write devotedly. That is the secret.'

It is one of his many anomalies that this man who is to-day the spoiled hero of a metropolis should have come from a rural stock in Bavaria. Of his immediate parents, his mother was a brewer's daughter; while his father had left the land and taken to horn playing in the Court band. Even to-day the story goes that when Strauss retreats from the world to his summer home, a great rambling estate, not far from his original birthplace, he gives parties for all the peasants round about, drops his grand airs and audience ceremonies, and turns to welcome rude frankness and native candour. If this is true it illustrates strikingly a certain nostalgia for the soil which has given Strauss his note of sturdy originality, and his preference for instruments that touch real nature closely . . . like the waldhorn for which he has composed a whole concerto.

Primitive urges lie close in under the acquired sophistication of Strauss' thought. His 'Electra' is the frenzy of savage torture and despair. His 'Salome' is an abandonment of straining asceticism for lust. He has put madness, pathos, monumental pain into music. Delirium is his chief note, *la danse macabre*! It is to the dance that both his greatest operas mount as to a climax. While he has breathed philosophy into his 'Thus Spake Zarathustra,' and while he has caught the intellectual comment of Cervantes for his tone-poem, 'Don Quixote,' still he remains more passionate than cerebral, and must, like Antæus, return for his art's sustenance to earth. This is why Strauss is most himself in his garden, where, shut off from the noises of Vienna by high walls and by the great encircling expanse of the Belvedere, he can think his native thoughts in seclusion.

Here only can Strauss be trusted to be as self-conscious as when he is leading a concert, lost in music. His park, with its fine old firs and black spruce thickets, its low earthy banks broken by dwarf pine brambles, its shadowed, unexpected, hidden pools where leaves lie on the water and shy fish dart about, recalls his youth and reawakens the motif of his first inspirations.

As I see him walking among his trees and past his little lakes,

Strauss is an old man, grey, yet extraordinarily tall. One fails to appreciate his height at the conductor's stand in the Vienna Opera, for it is below the floor level of the auditorium. Here, on the path, he suddenly looms up towering. His thin top-coat sags in perpendicular lines to accommodate the hands which he has thrust deep into side pockets. His shoulders stoop together and he seems cadaverously, deceptively lean. The heavy head, square and shaggy as a mastiff's, comes as a surprise. It is in proportion with his height, yet not in proportion with the frame which has sunken and narrowed with the years. Dressed all in black, Strauss in his garden never fails to suggest a weird impression as he moves slowly along, sauntering, slanting, down the rows, like some giant bloom suddenly cut loose, to become peripatetic and cruise about with its great head bowing on inadequate stalk.

Musicians often have high, bulging foreheads. Strauss' forehead is more massive, more dominant, under its light, curling patch of hair, than even that of the Beethoven who is familiar to us through the famous bust. In Strauss' youth this Jove-like front almost over-weighted the dreaming peasant's face beneath. It absorbed into itself the imperceptible blonde eyebrows and lashes. It shadowed the great, dark, round, almost bovine eyes. It rendered ridiculous the nose that tilted up into a diminutive bulb at the end, and made a caricature of the manly strivings after a bushy, dapper moustache. Strauss' face in his twenties reflected the Strauss of that day: a mind long since matured and self-expressive, a will and a character yet undecided.

To-day the Nietzschean principles, the Wagnerian thunderings, to which Strauss has often vibrated, have put purpose into the eyes. Age has broadened the jaw. Instead of being top-heavy, the face is now pendulous and balanced. There is a certain humour in the lips, above which the moustache has become a close-cropped stubble, stoutly aggressive where it once was tentative and flaxen.

Strauss has acquired the air of a man who wins his arguments in life. He is, indeed, like George Bernard Shaw, a notoriously good business man. Both have had, as rebels and innovators, their callow apple cart period. Both have developed into a Michelangelo-like modesty. Even before Shaw started sending rude little notes to his interpreters, Strauss was writing sardonic instructions, possibly coached by his operatic wife:

'Should any singers think of singing this song, while the nineteenth century still is in existence, the composer would advise them to transpose it from this point, a half-tone lower (i.e., into E \flat), so that the composition may thus end in the key in which it began!'

This is effective. In fact, through his conducting, through his composing, and through his battling with the critics, Strauss has become a doughty man of the theatre. Had he been merely a pianist he might have remained a sort of *enfant gâté*, like Pachmann. Had he been merely a composer he might have remained aloof from the practical, a sort of modern Mozart. But being Wagnerian, Strauss set himself to command the stage. There is something in the drama and in the contest with an audience which wakes a dreamer and quickens the most flaccid pulse.

The men whom Strauss directs are really mastered. Under him the orchestra of the Vienna Opera becomes a perfect instrument, so clear, so easy, so frictionless, that the idea of instrumentation ceases and a concept of pure sound is born. In Wagner's 'Tristan and Isolde,' when Strauss directs it, one can rarely say when a new instrument takes up the thread and another drops it. Comparable is that perfection of singing when the voices seem not to issue from singers' throats but to hang above their heads. Strauss learned conducting under Bülow. He was thrown in to sink or swim. The master had him compose a suite for wind instruments, and then stood him up in front of an orchestra and made him conduct it without a rehearsal. After that first plunge, any feat of directing might well seem easy.

Strauss has his battles. I have seen him bring to heel that most ungainly of operatic elements, a mob of supernumeraries. It was in 'Lohengrin.' The orchestra, at work every day, maintained its timbre like a well-used Stradivarius. But the members of the chorus were on this occasion either ill-recruited or evilly disposed. They lagged. They watched Strauss' energetic baton with a studied, malevolent apathy.

None can catch a nuance of fault so swiftly as the Viennese. Those audiences who gather at the Opera House when Richard Strauss conducts come critically-minded.

'You are temporarily in Vienna,' Strauss has said to me. 'That is good. Vienna is the best place to hear my music. Here it is best presented. The operas are best prepared. And as for the gala performances of others' work, I direct them myself!'

And so throughout the audience on this particular evening there were many who had come armed with small reprints of the score Strauss was to lead, and who sat throughout the entire drama, silently turning pages and reverently following every measure of the beat. Such earnest students, offering thus their highest praise, are indeed the surest gage and proof of the old conductor's unfailing excellence . . . yet on this occasion, they all felt it, something was awry.

Little rumours ran about. The chorus was dragging behind, gradually being lost :

' Badly rehearsed! '

' Underfed! '

' Lazy! '

' Sabotage! '

Even the stalls and the boxes became restive.

Strauss had long since felt the dead weight of that lingering beat, and had started his attack upon it. He is a sombre, reserved director. His gestures are turned in upon themselves, held close rather than squandered. He is the absolute antithesis of the tall, capable Furtwängler, who combines with his great musical gifts an amount of gymnastic display which the older master scorns.

Strauss must have been tempted to adopt some such method against his supernumeraries, but he did not. He dominated by calmness. He barely accentuated the stroke of his baton. He hardly glanced at the recalcitrant group standing together on one side of the stage. Yet the orchestra felt his mood and followed him. The audience felt it, and swayed forward in their seats. The rebels felt it, and desisted. Imperceptibly, everyone in the great house had been embraced in the effort of will the director was making to pull his chorus into line. Almost before the incident had been appreciated it was over. The mob was singing in time. Richard Strauss had won.

' How did you do it? '

' Precision! '

Strauss is like Stravinsky in that he insists upon the absolute, literal, point for point, mathematical reading of his scores. ' I demand precision in the rendering of my own works, and try to achieve it in my own interpretation of others.' He is a thorough German in his pedantry. ' But I do not consider myself narrowly German,' he has protested to me in his garden. His voice is low, resonant and sensitive, even persuasive when he allows it to be so. He speaks as if his native language were without gutturals or harshness. One reaches his idea through the tonal inflection as swiftly as through the word. ' Music is a province largely international. My own musical origins are thus not all German. I have learned from the French and the Italians too. Yet of course it is true that my early *Aus Italien*, in spite of its name, is not Italian at all. It is simply a German visitor's impressions of the southland.'

Throughout Strauss' work, where he has been touched at all from beyond frontiers, he has reacted only in so far as to give a German impression of the influence. We may remember that his two

masters, Bülow and Ritter, were such patriots that they never failed to doff their caps when passing before Wagner's windows in the Ostra-Allee. Strauss toiled over Brahms and Bach and Beethoven with his father. The most that can be said for Liszt and for Berlioz, Strauss's foreign suns, is that they shone on him through German screens.

Among poets, Nietzsche, the fiercest German of them all, has had perhaps the greatest influence on Richard Strauss. Megalomaniac Teuton that he was, it was he who inspired the musician in his best symphonic poems, who inspires him also to rule others. Strauss does not only dominate his orchestras and choruses. He dominates his impressarios as well, his public, his collaborators. 'When Hoffmansthal sought me out,' Strauss has told me, 'and when he suggested that we should write something together, we started what afterwards became our "Electra." He gave me his book, but as opera it was impossible. It had to be worked over, and that was difficult to manage.' The poet, indeed, whose name was already established when he turned to Strauss, took rather a condescending tone toward the young composer—at first. Strauss, though new at the opera, was none the less unbending. He insisted that if anyone did the fitting and the dovetailing, it should not be he. He aimed at domination from the beginning. 'I took his "Electra,"' he has told me, 'and I made out of it something which I thought could be put to music. There is a difference between the theatre and the opera.' It is upon a statement of this difference that Strauss has laboured most of his life. What can and what cannot be put into music has been the root of all his disputes. There can be in Strauss' operas variety of mood, but there can be nothing untheatrical. Thus, having gone to the depths in the sombre, classical 'Electra,' he accepted eagerly a flight into humour when his librettist suggested 'Rosenkavalier,' where 'there are two big rôles, one for baritone, the other for a shapely wench in men's clothes . . . à la Farrar or Mary Garden.'

'Don't forget,' Strauss, man-of-the-theatre, wrote to Hoffmansthal, poet, 'that the audience must be made to laugh, not smile or grin!'

In collaborating to turn Molière's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* into 'Ariadne auf Naxos,' Strauss, impelled by his instinct and his study of the first unsatisfactory performances, so altered the original texts that there was nothing of Molière remaining at all, little enough, indeed, of Hoffmansthal, and the whole thing was finally a compound of moods and whimsies, notes and motifs, inextricably woven into sound . . . the work of the composer.

'It is the most difficult thing in the world to write a libretto for opera,' he said; 'young men, some of them great poets, bring me

material, yet I am forced to tell them: "It is easier to compose an enduring tragedy than to write words to be set to music. . . . The poetic phrase must conform to the musical, of course, but the difficulty lies in something much more subtle than that. . . . In the mass, in the weight, in the length of the word. All is important. Words become music! . . . There are not twenty operas in the world which are blessed with the happy chance of fitted words. Mozart's! Beethoven's "Fidelio"! Then "Carmen"! Then "Tristan und Isolde!" There are but a few more . . . among them my "Electra" and "Salome." "

Why should Strauss be modest? Being a conscious artist, he appreciates (none better!) what he has accomplished:

" "Intermezzo" is a possible variation, a development away from the regular form of opera, such as were my "Electra" and "Salome." I have shown its possibilities and left it. Now others are trying to take it up and carry it further. Though most of the moderns are at it, they are not succeeding. It is more difficult than it looks."

But Strauss is content not to study too closely the newer music. 'I have not the time to follow every concert and look into every fresh reputation. I know that I have influenced many. Others who owe me nothing directly are none the less advancing along ways I have suggested. The Russians, however, have their own line of development. I omit them from the ranks of those whom I have touched.'

Two well-known modern composers have startled opinion by introducing into orchestras, the one a series of whirring aeroplane propellers, the other a phonograph disc recording the natural song of the nightingale. When he heard of their experiments, Strauss snorted, 'I am not in favour of going quite so far as that. It is perhaps a side-issue. There is a limit.' But, after all, is there? Strauss pondered. He himself had been the first to bring out of the wings and place among the other instruments that strange contrivance known in theatrical circles as the wind machine. Where cannot the question of inspiration enter in? The rebel master who had become a classic hesitated . . . drew a long breath . . . and then suddenly reverted to the years of his insurgence: 'There are no fixed laws for these things. If one can do it, and it serves a musical aim, then one has succeeded. There are no limits, there are no schools! There are only individuals! There are only talents, geniuses! When one reckons with these, one must permit, expect, welcome, . . . anything!'

WILLIAM LEON SMYSER.

TOLSTOY AND MOUSSORGSKY

A PARALLELISM OF MINDS

EVER since Plutarch men have amused themselves by drawing parallels between the great. It is at bottom merely a pastime, an intellectual game which at the same time allows scope—too much—for the play of the imagination. But it is not quite an empty sport; like other games, it is a discipline and an education. To change the metaphor: if our travelling leads us nowhere, we at least see many things on the way. But one danger above all is to be guarded against. 'It is,' says Bacon, 'the vice of high and discursive intellects'—and others, maybe—to attach too much importance to slight resemblances; when this is indulged to excess it leads men to catch at shadows instead of substances.' Moreover, in comparing two such men as Tolstoy and Moussorgsky, who were not only compatriots but contemporaries,⁽¹⁾ there is always the risk of attributing to individuals ideas and beliefs generally current and belonging to the common stock. Here, common sense and one's more or less defective knowledge of the period are one's only safeguards.

The coincidence of Moussorgsky's conception of art and his methods of artistic procedure with Tolstoy's may be partially due to the circumstances in which both lived, but even if it were wholly so, the identity of ideas between Russia's greatest novelist and her greatest dramatic musician would be hardly less interesting. The agreement is not limited to one or two striking points; it is extraordinarily complete. Insistence on the unimportance of beauty in art; the conception of the function of art as 'a means of conversing with one's fellow-men'; contempt for technique, even as a means; a strong leaning toward realism; a tendency to make the masses more important than individual characters or to value individuals in proportion as they are representative of the masses; over-valuation of the peasant type—all these are equally characteristic of Tolstoy and Moussorgsky. It is true that all these heterogeneous theories, instincts and prejudices are (or, at least, can be shown to be) more or less logically connected. But, man being the illogical animal he is, that hardly makes the coincidence less striking.

Let us take these points one by one; first, the contempt for beauty as the end and aim of the serious artist. When the seventy-year-old Tolstoy wrote *What is Art?* he took this as his starting-point. His method was simple enough. He catalogued all the known definitions of beauty, from Baumgarten's to those of contemporary

⁽¹⁾ Tolstoy was about ten years older than Moussorgsky, though he survived him by nearly thirty years.

aestheticians, and pointed out that they might be boiled down to two fundamental conceptions, 'the one objective, mystical, that beauty is one of the manifestations of the absolutely Perfect, of the Idea, of the Spirit, of Will, or of God—a fantastic definition, founded on nothing; the other, on the contrary, a very simple, and intelligible, subjective one, which considers beauty to be that which pleases.' And he concluded that 'to see the aim and purpose of art in the pleasure we get from it, is like assuming that the purpose and aim of food is the pleasure derived when consuming it.' Moussorgsky had, by whatever chain of reasoning (or none), come to the same conclusion a quarter of a century earlier, for we find him writing to Stassov in 1872 that 'the artistic representation of mere beauty, in the material sense of the word, is sheer childishness, a rudimentary form of art.' His conception of the artist's business, outlined in this letter and later ones to the same correspondent,⁽²⁾ is not that of the Tolstoy of *What is Art?* but it exactly describes the attitude of the earlier Tolstoy of the great novels: 'Life, wherever it manifests itself; truth, however unpleasant; daring, plain-speaking before everyone *à bout portant*—that is what I aim at.' Again: 'The masses, like individuals, present subtle traits, difficult to fathom, not yet grasped. To distinguish them, to learn to read them at sight, by observation and hypothesis, to study their inmost recesses, to feed mankind with them as with an as-yet-unknown strengthening food—that is the task, the supreme joy!' And in his brief autobiography Moussorgsky states his 'profession of artistic faith' as the belief that 'art is a means of conversing with men, and not an end in itself,' which exactly anticipates Tolstoy's conclusion in *What is Art?*

Now this view of art is essentially that of philosophical optimism—probably unconscious in Moussorgsky's case, all too self-conscious in Tolstoy's. Life is real; life is earnest; and everything which in no way helps humanity toward its goal is mere child's play. Carlyle said something to the same effect about the Waverley novels. It was the old Puritan view. And the pessimistic view harmonises curiously with it. In the very year that Moussorgsky finished 'Boris,' the young Nietzsche—not yet out of his Schopenhauerian-Wagnerian leading-strings—had written his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, to prove that great art (that is, *beautiful art*) springs only from the soil of pessimism. Confronted with a real world of imperfection, contradiction and ultimate chaos, man is compelled to make something whole and perfect and harmonious *for himself*.⁽³⁾ Nietzsche traces the decline of Greek art from the appearance of Socrates, the 'theoretical optimist.' Once the universe could be shown to admit of a logical

(2) Quoted by Calvocoressi.

(3) 'My melancholy seeks repose in the hiding-places and abysses of perfection; for that purpose I need music,' he wrote years afterwards.

explanation art was no longer regarded as a necessity but as—mere child's play.

In various notes and sketches dating from the same period,⁽⁴⁾ Nietzsche makes his position even clearer. He, too, concludes that beauty exists only in our own 'consciousness of pleasure.' But, far from beauty being truth, truth beauty, the sole function of the beautiful (hence, the sole object of art) is to cover reality, the terrible truth, with a veil of illusion. 'The further a thing is from real existence, the more pure, beautiful and good it is. . . . It is not possible to live with truth; the Will to Truth is a symptom of degeneracy.' Incidentally, Nietzsche attributes classic art to the 'pessimism of strength,' the artist rejoicing in the knowledge that he alone can create perfection, and traces romantic art from the 'pessimism of weakness,' the artist brooding sentimentally over an imperfect world. So, if we like, we can reconcile Nietzsche with Tolstoy to our own satisfaction by assuming that great art may be either classic, romantic or optimistic in origin.

So much for theorising. But the important point is that contempt for beauty as the end of art, and striving after 'truth,' 'reality,' are shown to be logical consequences of an optimistic 'Weltanschauung.' We have seen that Moussorgsky, like Zola, wanted to take for his subjects 'life, wherever it manifests itself, and truth, however unpleasant,' and we know that Tolstoy did do so, achieving his effects by minute observation and analysis and the accumulation of an infinite number of accurately rendered details. But the musical realist cannot go about things in quite the same way. There is a kind of musical realism, which Moussorgsky exploited to the full in several of the 'Tableaux d'une exposition,' in some of his songs and in a few passages of 'Boris Godounov' and 'Khovantchina,' but, depending as it does so largely on arbitrary association of musical with non-musical ideas, we can only smile at it as we do at Haydn's 'sinuous worm' and Strauss's windmill. Moussorgsky's true 'realism' is revealed in his choice of subjects and in his handling of his artistic materials. As he claimed, he took all life for his province, not merely those facets of it which tradition and convention have set aside as peculiarly suitable for artistic treatment. He wrote songs about children, about death-chambers, about the sorrows of village idiots and about musical critics. And if, like the French literary 'realists' and 'naturalists,' his choice of subjects betrays a leaning to the morbid and sordid he never made the mistake, as they did, of supposing that anything is interesting simply because it is 'life.' Nor did Tolstoy. Both had the true artist's ability to select carefully while appearing to pick at random. 'Realism' and 'truth' are not

(4) Published in Vols. IX and XIV of the German edition of his complete works.

necessarily synonyms for the same quality in art. For that matter, realism is not an affair of quality at all, but of quantity. All art is a compromise between phenomena presented to the senses or the mind—shapes, colours, emotions, musical ideas or what not, and certain arbitrary limits and conventions—five acts, sonata form, a rectangular canvas, metre, a certain number of instruments. It is for each artist to decide how near or how far from nature he is to fix his compromise—the nearer the more ‘realistic’ his work will be; and artistic ‘truth’ consists in being true, not to nature (which is impossible), but to whatever compromise has been adopted. Moussorgsky, in his unvarying practice, and Tolstoy, theorising at the end of his creative career, gave their votes unhesitatingly in favour of the minimum of stylisation. The less technique was brought into play in converting the raw material of nature into the finished work of art the better.

Naturally, therefore, both detested the worship of technique for its own sake. Moussorgsky thought musicians were worse than other artists. ‘Tell me,’ he asks Stassov, ‘why, when I listen to the conversation of young artists, painters or sculptors, I can follow their thoughts and understand their opinions and aims, and I seldom hear them mention technique, save in certain cases of absolute necessity? On the other hand, when I find myself among musicians I rarely hear them utter a live idea; one would think they were still at school; they know nothing of anything but technique and “shop-talk.” Is the art of music so young that it has to be studied in this puerile manner?’ Tolstoy, in his downright, bludgeoning way, says, ‘A man in our time, if only he possesses a certain amount of ability and selects some speciality, may, after learning the methods of counterfeiting used in his branch of art, turn out unceasingly to the end of his life works which will pass for art in our society. To produce such counterfeits, definite rules or recipes exist in each branch of art. So the talented man, having assimilated them, may produce such works *à froid*, cold-drawn, without feeling.’ When in a later chapter of *What is Art?* he looked to ‘the artist of the future, who will be free from all the perversion of technical improvements concealing the absence of subject-matter, and who, not being a professional artist, will only produce art when he feels impelled to do so by an irresistible inner impulse,’ he did not realise that such an artist had died in Russia seventeen years before. It would be difficult to imagine music more free from ready-made (or self-made) formulas of expression than Moussorgsky’s is. As Debussy put it, his music ‘*ressemble à un art de curieux sauvage qui découvrirait la musique à chaque pas tracé par son émotion.*’ Whether Tolstoy was acquainted with Moussorgsky’s work I do not know; possibly he knew it without recognising it as what he wanted. At any rate he dismissed Pushkin’s

'Boris,' on which Moussorgsky based his opera, as 'a cold, brain-spun work.'

Both Tolstoy and Moussorgsky were obviously 'realists' by artistic instinct. But both were also conscious that stylisation and technical ingenuity, necessary in art devoted to the ideal of beauty, were only an encumbrance to art intended as a 'means of conversing with one's fellow-men.' They were consciously at war with everything which limits the appeal of art. Art which appealed only to the cultured few seemed to them artificial and ridiculous. They detested 'preciousness.' Tolstoy devoted heated pages to the destruction of Baudelaire and Verlaine and Mallarmé (such a bull in such a china-shop!); and we find Moussorgsky exercising his sarcasm on artists, 'the whole of whose aspirations are comprised in the distilling, one by one, of precious little drops' and who 'take no interest in the essentials of life.' 'People more useless to contemporary art are not to be found, I should think, even in the land of clouds.'

Tolstoy was prepared to carry his theory that art should be universal in appeal, to its *reductio ad absurdum* by setting up his favourite type, the 'unperverted peasant,' as a sounder judge of art than a cultured man 'whose taste has been atrophied by his education and life.' Whether Moussorgsky would have preferred such critics even to those he ridiculed in 'The Musician's Peep-Show' and 'The Classic' is doubtful, but he fully shared Tolstoy's admiration for the type. After his death, his brother told Stassov, 'In his years of childhood and youth as in middle age, my brother Modeste always felt a particular sympathy with our peasants; he considered the Russian moujik a real man.' Perhaps he was conscious of the peasant-blood, from his mother's side, in his own veins.

The admiration of Moussorgsky and Tolstoy for the people had yet another consequence. Tolstoy not only desired that art should be comprehensible to the masses; in his novels, notably in *War and Peace*, he, so to speak, dramatised mass feeling. He had a theory of necessity and free-will which Mr. Aylmer Maude thus summarises in his introduction to *War and Peace*: 'Not only historic life, but all human life, is directed not only by intelligence or will—that is, not by thoughts or wishes that have reached a clearly conscious form—but by something mysterious and strong, the so-called nature of man. The sources of life, both of individuals and of whole peoples, are much profounder and more potent than the conscious choice and conscious reflection which apparently guides people.' So, whereas the pessimist braces his will, shuts out compassion and rests all his hopes on the culture of the individual, the optimist comfortably sees salvation in sympathy with the instincts of the masses. The subject of *War and Peace* is the blindly achieved triumph of the Russian people, in spite of their leaders and even in spite of themselves. The

heroes of the book, from Kutuzov, the Commander-in-Chief, to the peasant-soldier, Karataev, are those who represent the mass-instinct of the Russian people.

Moussorgsky was expressing the same thought rather more vaguely (as becomes a musician) when he said that 'the masses present subtle traits, difficult to fathom,' and defined the artist's task as the study of these features and the 'feeding of mankind' with them. How he himself carried out that task we all know. It has become a commonplace of criticism to say that the real hero of 'Boris Godounov' is the Russian people. But Moussorgsky had subordinated individuals to masses in earlier works than 'Boris.' Stassov⁽⁵⁾ tells us that in 'Salammbô' (1863-4), of which Moussorgsky wrote only the 'book' and a few numbers, 'according to the libretto, all these scenes, filled with dramatic movement, in Meyerbeer's style, depicted great masses of people at moments of emotional excitement; the scenes between the principal characters were of less importance.' Although in the later 'Khovantchina' more importance is given to individuals, they are important as representatives rather than for their own sakes. The tragedy lies not in the fall of the Khovanskys and the destruction of the Old Believers, but in the passing of the old Russia they stand for. Moussorgsky appears to have progressed from opera in which masses were employed for their own sake, because the handling of masses gave him pleasure as an artist, to opera in which the masses or their representatives were used as visible symbols of what he conceived to be the profoundest currents of national feeling.

They are curious people, these artists who are so painfully conscious of what they are doing. They do it so well, so thoroughly—so unlike artists. They will have nothing of the labour of technique, yet they labour like ants at the accumulation of correct, matter-of-fact detail. It would be unjust to compare *War and Peace* with Frith's *Derby Day*, but in this matter-of-factness lies the secret weakness of both Tolstoy and Moussorgsky as creative artists. It is far more serious in the man whose medium is music than in the man who works in prose. It is in the nature of prose to be prosaic, but prosaic music—recitative, for instance, or 'The Market Place at Limoges'—is only half music, an abortion. No one realised that more clearly than Tolstoy. One is left with an amused feeling that he might have approved of the more lyrical (that is, the more beautiful) pages of 'Boris' and 'Khovantchina' as 'simple, clear and powerful music,' but would have condemned the scene in Pimen's cell, the death of Boris and songs like 'Savichna' and 'The Orphan,' in which beauty is subordinated to truth, in much the same terms as he applied to Wagner's 'Forest Murmurs'—'absolutely unintelligible musically.'

GERALD E. H. ABRAHAM.

(5) Quoted by Calvocoressi.

STOCKTAKING, 1930

IN his introduction to the official programme of the Eighth (Liège) Festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music, Professor Dent expresses the view that the phase of eager experiment is at an end. Already at Geneva, and even a year earlier, at Siena, there was observed a general slackening of the quest for new technical resources, and a falling off in the proportion of music which could be termed provocative. At Liège there was practically nothing that could be so described. Even J. M. Hauer's Violin Concerto, the only work performed that was in any sense enigmatic, stood for the present stage of a musical doctrine which he commenced to unfold more than ten years ago and to which he has clung with a remarkable singleness of purpose. In so far as it was experimental, the Concerto was not based upon new experiment, and therefore offers no contradiction to the view that the phase of experiment is at an end.

This is only what one would expect. Whether one accepts the theory of a definable periodicity in musical history, or whether one merely applies the well-known æsthetic sequence, it is reasonably clear that we have been passing through the earlier phases of a new dispensation. There is a certain amount of plausible evidence in support of the former theory. In describing it thirteen years ago I adopted 150 years as the unit, and it is undeniable that from 1150-1800 (the Troubadours) onwards there have been turning-points about 1450, 1600 (the Nuove Musiche), and 1750 (Death of Bach), and one such was therefore to be expected about 1900. Since then a German lecturer, in expounding the theory, has given his preference to a unit of 300 years. But it is easy to exaggerate the importance of mere dates, and there is such a thing as coincidence. Far more significant were the symptoms that the Romantic movement had led, as it must, to the decadence of the particular phase which had generated it. The excesses of all kinds which invaded music about the end of the last century were unmistakable portents of the approaching close of a chapter of musical history, and the corollary that another was already shaping itself.

It is characteristic of the first stage of a new art phase that there must be experiment. For one reason or another the old terms have lost much of their expressive value. They are like literary expressions which are full of meaning when first put into circulation, and become practically meaningless by attrition, except, of course, in their original context. The age of experiment set in because it was needed and the time was ripe for it. It has come to an end because it has performed its function of providing a sufficiency of new expressive

resources. It has yielded a profusion of new material none of which has been fully exploited, and much of which has scarcely been developed. That also is characteristic of the phase through which we have passed. If we view the musical world as a living organism—and since civilisation is so regarded nowadays, why not one of its component parts?—it seems natural that the more energy is employed in the invention of technical resources the less will be available for their exploitation. A time of experiment is not likely therefore to be fertile in masterpieces. In a classical age the energy devoted to the invention of resources is comparatively moderate. The rest is concentrated upon the exploitation of well-seasoned resources inherited from just such an age as ours, and is therefore productive of mature art. If all but a few works of the phase from which we are emerging were to pass into complete oblivion, as is quite possible, it would still be the historian's duty to describe it as creative, because it will have created the material in which the artist of the next phase is to work.

Even if we agree to accept 1930 as concluding the experimental stage of the new dispensation, it is difficult to determine its duration, for the beginning was very gradual. Already in Grieg and particularly in Dvorák there were signs of the coming change. Technically they were also to be found in the youthful works of the Russian Nationalists. It is dangerous to look to Mussorgsky for evidence. If he is regarded by many as the father of the 'moderns' it is not for technical reasons but because of his æsthetic outlook. There is, however, evidence forthcoming from Borodin. Yet from the present point of view all these and even some who came later appear as precursors rather than primitives—to use Charles Lalo's classification. They did not so much effect as portend change. It seems more than likely that the future historian will regard the first impressionistic works of Debussy as inaugurating the period of experiment, and the contemporary works of Strauss as the last great manifestation of the era that was passing. We are still too near to these events to speak with any certitude, but it is a tenable hypothesis that the four decades 1890-1930 comprise the phase of experiment. It is very tempting to compare them with the three decades 1590-1620, which play a somewhat analogous part in the story of musical evolution.

If it is correct to assume that the phase of experiment is ended the time is approaching when its results will have to be harvested, winnowed and garnered in the text-books. At present the contents of the latter may be regarded as of three kinds: (1) that which is still of value as a guide to practice; (2) that which is no longer of value as a direct guide to practice, but still serves as a foundation to musical culture (much as the classical languages, though no longer of practical use, are still the foundation of general culture); and (3) that which is entirely and irrevocably obsolete. To illustrate the distinction between

the two last divisions it is enough to say that R. O. Morris's *Contrapuntal Technique in the Sixteenth Century* is of incalculable value as a foundation, whereas the greater part of Prout's *Counterpoint* has ceased to have any value whatsoever.

There have already been attempts to codify the new procedures, but most of them err to a variable extent in one of two opposite directions. Either they display too much determination to explain the new in terms of the old, and too much ingenuity in doing so; or they start by postulating a new heaven and a new earth. French and English writers on this subject have mostly taken the former course, German writers the latter. Hauer, for instance, starts with a *tabula rasa* upon which he expounds an entirely new doctrine of musical practice. The least helpful of all are those who simply collect examples as a boy collects postage stamps and paste them in a book like the late Dr. Eaglefield Hull's *Modern Harmony*. One of the most satisfactory writers on modern theory and practice is Charles Koechlin, but even he sometimes prefers a tortuous explanation which effects a reluctant reconciliation with the past to a simple one in terms of the present. If theorists persist in that course text-books must necessarily become unwieldy. The problem does not consist in finding room, within the framework of the past, for the multitude of recently created precedents. Nor does it consist in 'scrapping' the cumulative aspect of musical experience and starting afresh. It consists in devising a framework large enough to accommodate both the past and the present, and even elastic enough not to be disrupted when the future seeks admittance. Surely it is not beyond the wit of man to devise such a framework.

Meanwhile the present moment would seem to be an opportune one for taking stock of the new and only partly developed resources awaiting incorporation in the *materia musica*. Directly or indirectly they mostly owe their origin to a change in current musical æsthetics. The analogy with 1600 is striking. What happened then was that a new view began to be taken of the relations between the vertical and the horizontal principles, and from this view sprang the germ of the 'harmonic period.' About 1900 there began to arise once more a different view of harmony and counterpoint, and, what is perhaps even more important, of the relations between them. They are two radically different processes, but during the nineteenth century they became so inextricably mixed in theory and in practice that it seemed as if one could only be expressed in terms of the other. One is line and the other is colour, but it became a common practice for a composer to treat as a melodic line what was only the outline of a blob of harmonic colour; which is about as rational as it would be for a painter to trace the outline of a patch of blue and call it a line drawing. The 'laws' of polyphonic part-writing were held to be applicable to

harmony, and harmony was regarded as a weaving of strands, which is the prerogative of counterpoint. That great music sometimes resulted delayed, but could not avert, the inevitable nemesis of this confusion, which is plainly discernible in many of those gigantic scores which were fashionable about the turn of the century. Then Debussy began to do openly what some others had done surreptitiously. He employed vertical combinations, that is to say harmony, in more or less complete disregard of any horizontal considerations, as colouring matter only, not as strands of a texture. This was the signal for the extraordinary flood of harmonic lasciviousness that spread through music at the beginning of the century, and did not abate until the war period. The excesses to which it led were a temporary evil, but the experience gained was of lasting value in enriching the harmonic palette. The inevitable reaction has put such colour schemes out of favour for the present, but there they are, available for use when needed.

The emancipation of harmony from counterpoint had as natural corollary the emancipation of counterpoint from harmony. In polyphonic writing a composer may aim at the blending of parts, or he may intend them to stand out effectively one from the other. According to nineteenth century theory he was expected to achieve both at once. In the twentieth he has abandoned all attempt at compliance. He now does one thing or the other, and preferably the other. The theoretical framework of the future will have to accommodate both procedures, and the text-books offer guidance in both practices; if they are to incorporate present-day practice. It is no use saying that 'linear' counterpoint is simply counterpoint that does not fit. If that were so there would be no good or bad writing in linear counterpoint, and those of us who have heard much recent music are well aware how good it can sound—and how bad!

In the matter of tonality the framework must obviously be atonal, because tonality is selective, and must therefore select from the larger field. It will first show freedom of movement and then show the formal advantages to be gained by circumscribing that freedom with a tonality. Only in this way is it possible to accommodate within one framework all the diatonic systems, modal and other, in their ever-growing variety, the various 'twelve-note' atonal systems of Central Europe, and the polytonality which is more or less everywhere in at least incidental use. And a framework which does not find room for all of them is insufficient, for experience has shown that each has a musical purpose to serve. Some of these systems appear at present to be still at the experimental stage, but there is very little musical experiment that does not produce something of value, though it may prove out of proportion to the cerebration involved.

Though tonality is usually defined as three-functional, established

by a tonic, a dominant and a subdominant, it is the disposition of the rest of the scale, that is to say the mode, that provides the characteristic element. Here the effect of recent practice has been to make the diatonic scale commensurate with the chromatic. In other words these 'twelve-note' atonal systems must seek another term to describe them, for the diatonic have nowadays every bit as much right to be called 'twelve-note' systems. This is the result of the gradual spread of polymodality. It seems a far-off age of innocence when we had only major and minor modes. Long ago we began to speak of major-minor, and minor-major, using scales which, though we pretended otherwise, contained more than seven diatonic notes. Then the old modes, or new modes resembling them, were reinstated, until to-day there is no note within the octave that a composer does not use diatonically on occasion. The sharpened but still diatonic fourth, with its Lydian associations, is of everyday occurrence, and so is the flattened supertonic, which recalls the Phrygian. And since, following upon the major-minor precedent, the modes have reached a general state of coalescence, these and other notes, formerly 'accidental,' have acquired diatonic status.

It is probably this which so often makes illusory the semblance of atonality. Its doctrinaire exponents profess to treat the twelve notes as absolutely equal in their functional properties, but in practice they can with difficulty bring themselves to do so. So long as the old diatonic memories survive they are irresistibly impelled, in order to assert their atonal principles, to avoid the familiar note-relations and favour the unfamiliar, which can scarcely be described as an impartial attitude. But even the hitherto unfamiliar note-relations have become familiar in other contexts, and particularly through the modern variety of modes. Hence the atonalists are harder pressed than ever to create an atonal effect. They deny tonality in its three-functional aspect, but its characteristic flavourings can be tasted nearly all the time, though the aural palate may be momentarily puzzled to disentangle them—just as a man may recognise a flavour in the soup but be unable to 'place' it. That is why I imagine the future starting-point will be the endless chromatic scale common to both systems. Intervals will be examined, vertically and horizontally. Then the advantages will be pointed out of adopting, temporarily or otherwise, a keynote, and finally the constructional values of each interval in relation to that keynote. Only in some such way can the same framework embrace 'Pierrot Lunaire' and 'God Save the King' without doing violence to one, or failing in respect to the other. The simplest diatonic forms of melody will never die out, however 'atonal' music may become. Even the elaborate system of 'chromatic alteration' and of overlapping appoggiaturas will not fall into complete desuetude, though I think it will be returned to the ancillary position it occupied before

the later Romantics discovered in it so poignant a mode of expression. It will be there if composers need it, but present indications suggest that they will find it too lacking in objective clarity and altogether too sentimental for serious purposes.

Orchestration being another form of colour, it has passed through a crisis analogous to that which overtook harmony. In Spartan times we had a three-manual orchestra just as we have a three-manual organ with couplers for use in tutti. Perhaps Rimsky-Korsakoff, more than anyone else, was instrumental in disintegrating it into its component stops, but Debussy followed him very closely. There is a passage in 'L'Après Midi' the lay-out of which is practically identical with that of a similar passage in 'Antar.' Under this impulse orchestration became more and more multicoloured—iridescent was the word favoured at the time. Soon every member of the orchestra became a soloist, entitled to be provided by the composer with a part not merely within the competence of his instrument, but specially written to show off its 'points.' The famous answer to the question: 'What is the clarinet saying?'—'It is saying, madam, I am a clarinet,' was taken for a time with a seriousness that seems now to have been exaggerated, but which had the inestimable advantage of greatly increasing the orchestral vocabulary. But meanwhile the wave of Puritanism provoked by the orgies of harmonic colour began to reach the orchestra also. Then the cry was that orchestral colour had become so dazzling to the ear that one no longer cared twopence about the music. Music had become 'overdressed.' The salvationists induced her to adopt their uniform, and there was an end—temporarily—to the glitter. But the means by which it was produced are on record. There is a vast amount of orchestral experience which has still to be digested, and which will all come into use again some day when the Wahabis no longer occupy Mecca.

There is one question which has scarcely yet been approached. It is that of the new attitude towards rhythm and metre. The rhythmic 'cell' is to-day just as much material for development as hitherto the harmonic or melodic 'cell' has been. And this rhythmic material is now employed in much greater freedom than has ever been tolerated since bar-lines were invented. But it is an orderly freedom. Neither in Stravinsky's rhythm, nor in Holst's, nor in Walton's, is there anything that suggests the arbitrary, and still less a wilful perversion of 'regular' rhythms, but so far no serious attempt has been made to discover the rationale of their irregularities. But the mysterious effects of rhythm entice us dangerously near to another field, that of psychology. And once we venture upon a bridge leading to another science we make the alarming discovery that music has bridges leading to them all, from biology to higher mathematics, and it is time to stop.

EDWIN EVANS.

A NOTE ON FOLK-SONG IN MODERN MUSIC

I wish to suggest a few qualifications—and, indeed, correctives—to the conclusions in Mr. R. H. Hull's article, 'The Cult of Archaism,' in last October's *MUSIC AND LETTERS*. These conclusions (in support of which he quotes very strong utterances of Professor Ernest Walker's) are that the theory of real and synthetic folk-song usage in composition is indefensible. The stand taken by Professor Walker is that the more elements borrowed from folk-music appear in a work, the less himself the composer is.

This, if true, would enable us to demonstrate the degree of originality which composers display when using folk-tunes by an arithmetical operation as simple as that by which Alice showed Humpty-Dumpty how many days there are in the year on which you can receive 'unbirthday' presents:

Contents of the work	365
Borrowed from folk-music	1
			<hr/>
Composer's contribution	364

But in practice things are not quite so simple.

Let us begin by disposing of the question of 'synthetic' (i.e., imitation) folk-music as raised by Mr. Hull. Can it be seriously asserted that themes invented under the influence of folk-song (or plain-song—a very important factor in the modern evolution of music) are necessarily more derivative than themes invented under the influence, conscious or unconscious, of the thousand-and-one elements that go to the formation of any composer's mind and craftsmanship? An enormous proportion of the themes which their composers honestly believe to have invented will prove to be more or less derivative if adequately tested: subconscious memories, associations and methods of procedure account for this. Whether a composer acquires his schooling exclusively from the study of music written in the traditional major-minor order, with its minimum of changes of time-signatures, or whether he also turns his attention to folk-song and plain-song with their infinite variety of modes and metres, he can be equally original, or equally lacking in originality.

But as an ounce of practical proof is worth many pounds of theorising, I shall refrain from expatiating on the absurdity of believing that the assimilation of folk-tunes and plain-song must needs lead composers to turn out mere 'synthetic' imitations (and I fear

that Mr. Hull and Professor Walker's utterances might induce a number of literally-minded readers to think thus), and proceed to quote the opening theme of Mussorgsky's 'Boris Godunof' (in its original rhythm, and not as 'corrected' by Rimsky-Korsakof):



Here we have what many people might consider as a mere 'synthetic' folk-tune. And as Mussorgsky, at first blush, does not seem to do much with it except repeat it at the end of the first scene, these people might feel justified in dismissing the matter with a 'the less Mussorgsky he.' But when Mussorgsky's masterpiece comes to be studied as carefully as Wagner's masterpieces have been, it will be realised that there lies in this simple, flowing melody far more than meets the ear; that it contains, in germ and often more than in germ, many of the principal elements that go to the making of the texture of 'Boris'—that it is charged with tremendous significance and is, in short, an almost unparalleled instance of originality, of genuine creative imagination (I have touched upon the topic—very superficially and inadequately, I fear—in the *Musical Times*, January, 1928).

As regards the borrowing of actual traditional tunes, again we should make a point of considering every single case on its own merits. When first I learnt (from the composer's own frank statement in his 'Memoirs') that for the final section of 'Antar'—which I consider one of the loveliest things in his output—Rimsky-Korsakof had taken not only the Arabian melody that is the main element of this section, but its characteristic and exquisite harmonisation, bodily from Christianovitch's collection of Arabian folk-tunes, I had quite a shock; and to this day I am ready to proclaim 'the less Rimsky-Korsakof he.'

In Liszt's 'Der Nächtliche Zug' (by the way, I rejoice to see that on January 29 the Philharmonic Society's programme includes this admirable, sadly neglected work, which is altogether flawless in structure and style) the position is not so obvious. The central portion, containing the climax, is entirely built on the Gregorian 'Pange Lingua.' Certainly, Liszt elected to use this melody for its associations as well as for its character. To ask whether the rare beauty of the chant enabled him to write a finer climax than he otherwise could have done is, I think, otiose. There is, in the 'Pange Lingua,' as in all outstandingly beautiful music, something that

makes all of us feel that nobody but its author could have written it. But the central portion of 'Der Nächtliche Zug' owes much of its beauty to its architecture, which is magnificent and entirely Liszt's own (Wagner remembered it in his treatment of the 'Faith' theme in 'Parsifal'). And there is evidence, in other works of Liszt, that he was not incapable of turning out a theme which, without any pretension to vie with the 'Pange Lingua,' would have suited his expressive and architectural purpose well enough; for instance, the great D major theme in the Piano Sonata.

All told, we have here, I think, at least as clear a case of 'not proven' as can be wished for.

But this is not enough. What we need is proof positive that composers (in and through the very act of borrowing and using folk-tunes) many display thorough originality, achieve unique results in which a true creative personality asserts itself to the full—results which nobody could have foretold even vaguely, and of which nobody could turn out even a moderately convincing imitation.

I do not know how many such works might be discovered by a critic having the whole of modern music at his finger-tips. To me the mere statement of the above conditions forthwith suggests, with irresistible force, Balakiref's 'Islamey' and d'Indy's 'Symphonie sur un chant montagnard français' (sometimes called, for short, 'Symphonie Montagnarde' or 'Symphonie Cévenole').

Many people do not pause to consider 'Islamey' seriously. Its extreme brilliancy and technical difficulty has led to its being treated as a mere '*morceau di bravura*.' Pianists who would never dream of playing any other piece by Balakiref include it in their programmes not because they wish to reveal its musical beauty, but just to show what they themselves are capable (or too often, alas! incapable) of doing. In my opinion it is one of the most significant pieces ever written for the piano, a signal instance of creative imagination achieving a worthy purpose.

The whole material of 'Islamey' is provided by three folk-tunes, the first two of which are Caucasian :

Ex. 2



Ex. 3



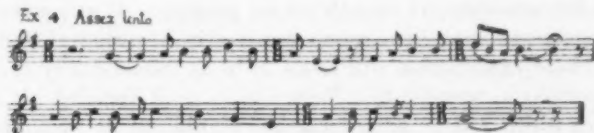
and the third Armenian :



It will be noticed that the first two are mainly rhythmical (the second, indeed, is a mere rhythmical fragment). The third is an organised tune, characteristic enough but not particularly charged with significance; Balakiref uses it in its original form but for a while, after which he proceeds to derive from it materials for a further expansion of the wonderful pageantry of rioting sounds and vivid, ever-changing colours which he had started evolving from the first two themes only.

There can be no doubt that he saw in these unassuming elements potentialities which nobody else could have seen—let alone bring into being. To ask whether he could or should have invented themes equal in value (potential or actual) to those he borrowed would be merely childish; none of the three is of outstanding intrinsic value, and none suggests any definite course of procedure—what happens to the third of them (the only one which might suggest a more or less conventional mode of 'treatment,' as distinct from 'use') is particularly unexpected. In short, 'Islamey,' that extraordinarily telling evocation, in terms of pure music, of Eastern sunshine and shimmer and languor and turmoil, is stamped throughout with Balakiref's personality—a strongly marked, most unusual personality, here displayed at its fullest and best.

I am quite sure that I shall not weaken my case by adducing, after 'Islamey,' the 'Symphonie Cévenole.' Here, it is true, the borrowed folk-tune teems with musical significance, is beautifully articulated and balanced, carries the suggestion of a definite harmonic foundation, and preordains the main character, if not of the whole symphony, then at least of the first two movements. Here it is, as it first appears :



It is a melody which any composer might be proud of having invented; and again one so beautiful that one cannot imagine anyone

but its (unknown) author inventing it. But how many composers could have seen in it what d'Indy has seen, done with it the equivalent of what he has done? As soon as we have heard the first theme of the *allegro*:



(a definite but not obvious derivation from it) we feel we can rest assured that here is no composer who borrows because he cannot create. And as the music proceeds, and we realise how wonderfully every poetic suggestion or undercurrent of the folk-tune is expanded and magnified, and gives birth in turn to fresh, unforeseen developments, highly original and highly characteristic of d'Indy at his best, the feeling is confirmed that the 'Symphonie C  venole' is as truly and fully a product of genuine creative imagination as it could be if its initial theme was not a folk-tune. I do not claim any privilege for d'Indy on the ground that he openly warns us that his symphony is 'sur un chant montagnard fran  ais' and thereby escapes suspicion of wishing to strut about in borrowed plumes. I would far rather say that the idea of exploiting the potentialities of the tune was part and parcel—and possibly the prime mover—of his initial inspiration. (I would not say the same as regards the borrowed themes in 'Islamey'; it strikes me, on the contrary, that they must have proved to be simply useful materials for the carrying out of a scheme originating in an independent inspiration.)

Here, then, are two works of rare beauty and originality—both of them founded on folk-tunes which are not in the least hidden or disguised, but quite visible (although emphatically not 'flies in amber' as are, according to Professor Walker, certain Kolo dance-tunes in Haydn's symphonies) and which to the present day stand unique of their kind, unimitated and inimitable—'Islamey' sixty odd years after its composition, the 'C  venole' nearly five-and-forty years.

These few examples are enough for my purpose. At any moment, a British composer may give us an apparently 'synthetic' folk-tune that on closer examination will prove to be as tremendously pregnant as Mussorgsky's opening to 'Boris,' or a work founded on actual folk-tunes which will be as original and significant as 'Islamey' or the 'C  venole'; and then, for sure, it will not do to start repeating mechanically 'the less himself he.'

M. D. CALVOCORESSI.

DUAL INSPIRATIONS

Twice during the last two years (1929-1930) there have been authenticated instances of bridge players dealing a complete suit of cards to each of the players. Exactly what the chances are against such a deal I cannot say, but I know that they run into figures fantastic and unthinkable. So, in spite of mathematicians and their cherished theories of probability, one particular arrangement of fifty-two cards has been repeated within two years.

If then it is possible, in actual fact, to deal identical hands with a pack of fifty-two cards twice within a few months, so it is possible for two composers to write identical tunes, though perhaps the chances against such a contingency are even more fantastic and unthinkable than against a similar deal at cards.

It is true that there are fifty-two cards on which to ring the changes as compared with twenty-four notes in music. I purposely say twenty-four because many melodies require two octaves for their statement and it is well known that the alteration of one note, up or down, is of the utmost importance to the tune's vitality. Although then there are nominally only twenty-four notes on which to ring the changes we must remember that certain other factors enter into the tune-possibilities which do not affect the fifty-two cards. For instance, in each deal every card must be represented; in other words, you cannot have a deal in which there are several queens in succession but no aces. In tune-formation, however, the repetition of one note is frequently an important factor. Again, in card-dealing the question of the rhythmic succession of the cards does not arise. The fifty-two cards are dead symbols. But in music, the rhythmic possibilities must be considered since the temporal relation of one note to another is often the principal contribution to the tune's existence. Thirdly, in card-dealing the arrangement of the deal cannot be altered by any invisible influence, that is, no identical deals can be made to appear dissimilar by any alteration of the lighting, of the colour of the card-table, or any such attendant circumstance. But in music identical melodies can be made to sound entirely different by the rearrangement of the substructure or harmony (this, I admit, is only an *audible* difference, but then since music is meant for the ears, it practically amounts to a real difference).

That there is a maximum of possible tune-formations, melodic, rhythmic and harmonic, I have no doubt, but I will leave the discovery of this maximum to mathematicians with better brains than I possess.

Of course we must remember that not every possible sequence of notes is a tune. Even so, there must be a vast number of unwritten tunes itching to be born into the world. Some musicians claim that all the melodic combinations are exhausted and that we now require a new system of tuning. But is this really so? Is there any reason to believe that Herr Nunweiser or Signor Potti has had to discard some lovely tune because he learnt that it was identical with one written by Handel or Rossini? No; if composers of to-day are not writing melodies comparable to those of the past the reason is either that they are not trying or that, trying, they are not succeeding. There must be hundreds of lovely phrases by Bach, Mozart or Beethoven which a composer of to-day does not know, but which, even if they were described in detail, he could not possibly re-compose. Writing melodies or melodic phrases is a sort of mental flowering, and if the tree is prolific it will bear blossoms. But it is not correct to say that a tree in my orchard is prevented from blossoming because some big tree in your orchard flowered prolifically ten years ago.

But we must now return to our principal subject. Limiting our notes to the diatonic scale, we should be very much reduced in our estimate of possible melodies. Most of the effective opening and closing bars have been used so persistently that to use them again is to invite the charge of plagiarism. However, there must be hundreds, thousands of great diatonic (or partly diatonic) tunes still waiting to be written and which would have been written if Handel, Bach, Mozart and Beethoven had each lived a few years longer. We may be sure that each of these great men had lovely phrases simmering in his mind when his life was cut short and that with his death a melodic glory passed away from the earth. But it is unlikely that any one by chance has written any of those great unwritten tunes which Beethoven had planned for his tenth Symphony, his F sharp minor Quintet or his third Mass. Such a thing might just possibly happen, if a man to-day, natured as Beethoven was natured, experiencing what Beethoven experienced, feeling what Beethoven felt upon all matters of the senses (including, of course, feeding and drinking), sought to express some mood or moods identical with those which Beethoven was seeking to express.

Considering what the chances are against any duplication of melody, the fact that there are such coincidences at all is surprising. By coincidence I mean similarities which extend beyond three notes, thus excluding such twins as—

Prize-song (Wagner). Sonata op. 100 (Brahms).
 Death and the maiden (Schubert). Opening of Elijah (Mendelssohn).
 Variation from op. 20 (Beethoven). The British Grenadiers.

To be a coincidence the similarity must extend over several beats and should possess identical structures, either rhythmic or harmonic.

Before we proceed to actual coincidences, let us consider the three possible forms of coincidence. There is first, the accidental resemblance of two or three notes, a coincidence entirely without interest. Secondly, there is an exact or almost exact reproduction of another tune, which is very strange and unusual. And thirdly, there is theft, which is absolutely inexcusable but fortunately not common.

How are we to distinguish between coincidence and theft? Well, if an idea of surprising value or beauty occurs in the work of a man which is characterised otherwise by persistent mediocrity, and if this same idea is found in the work of a man whose whole output is of the highest excellence, then we may say with tolerable certainty that the inferior composer has probably been guilty of theft. Or again: if we find several ideas in a man's work which also appear in the work of a well-known predecessor, then we are fairly safe in bringing against him a charge of theft. The similarity of one idea (or even two ideas) might not be sufficient evidence, but the similarity of a dozen looks horribly suspicious. For instance, when we find Shelley writing the words 'mazy motion' it may be only a coincidence that they also occur in *Kubla Khan* (Coleridge). When we find in an unfinished drama of Shelley the words 'pleasure-dome' it may again be only a coincidence that they also occur in *Kubla Khan*. But when we compare the following, gathered together by Professor Bradley—

COLERIDGE:	And gaze upon her with a thousand eyes.
SHELLEY:	Which gazes on thee with a thousand eyes.
COL.:	Almost upon the western wave
	Rested the broad bright sun.
SHEL.:	Until the sun's bright orb
	Seemed resting on the burnished wave.
COL.:	The game is done, 'I've won! I've won.'
SHEL.:	Till Death cried 'I win, I win.'

we cannot altogether hold Shelley blameless.

Nor can we excuse Handel for his wholesale thefts. The maxim which says that plagiarism is only a crime when the stolen jewel is obviously of greater value than the setting in which it occurs, is not wholly just, because though it condemns the Fagin it scarcely touches the Raffles. Certainly Handel's borrowed passages are not superior to his own work. Indeed, the wonder is that a man who owned such vast wealth should think it worth his while to pick the pocket of some poor wandering minstrel.

Is a man ever justified in using consciously an idea which he knows has been previously used by another? Certainly; if the idea which

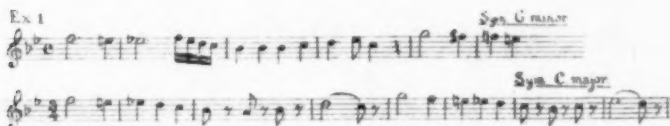
occurs to him, or which springs naturally out of his own work, is essential to his meaning, or if the composition would suffer by any alteration. It would indeed be hard upon to-day and to-morrow if a man is to be debarred from using some thought or idea which springs naturally from its surroundings because he happens to have been born fifty years after another man. For instance, in Cesar Franck's Violin Sonata the opening phrase of the last movement is unquestionably his own. In the development it strays from the major into the minor, when it becomes remarkably like the second section of Schumann's 'Arabesque.' Is Franck therefore to sacrifice an important development of his work out of a chivalrous respect for Schumann? Obviously, not. The beauty of the theme and its heredity legalise it as a genuine Franck.

Let us now turn to those coincidences in music when an inspiration has been duplicated in the work of one man or of two different men. These coincidences are the result of (a) a composer developing two ideas from one seed, (b) two composers being independently warmed by the same inspiration.

Let us consider some instances in the first group. Sometimes we feel almost sure that the composer was aware of his action: sometimes we feel equally sure that he was wholly unconscious of it, just as we are sure that an athlete is quite unaware that his physical actions in two different games are very alike. Occasionally composers find their melodies running to similar shapes as though their inspiration had got into a groove. This is particularly noticeable in Schubert's music where his first and second subjects frequently share rhythmic features (*cf.* the 'Wanderer' fantasy). This characteristic is also to be found in a slightly different form in the music of Mozart, who in spite of his phenomenal fecundity, was in his methods as economical as a Scottish housewife, serving up yesterday's joint as to-day's stew, and the bones as to-morrow's soup. Especially noticeable is this economy in the G minor Quintet. At the close of the minuet he notices a neat little cadence left over. 'We mustn't waste that,' he thinks. 'If it were served up in the major it would make a tasty trio.' Thus out of one theme the prudent housewife serves two attractive meals. Those who are familiar with this lovely work will remember other instances of this Mozartean method. A similar instance occurs in the D minor Pianoforte Concerto in the first movement of which the generous but economical Mozart notices a nice little phrase lying idle. 'If that phrase were eked out with a touch of chromatic harmony, it would make quite a useful dish for another meal,' he muses. And the result is the naïve little tune which opens the romanza.

More curious still is the following coincidence, which I feel sure

was the result of a mental mannerism⁽¹⁾ of which he was quite unaware. It is the similarity of structure between two themes: (1) from the G minor Symphony, (2) from the C major Symphony. Of course the explanation may be that Mozart, like all composers, allowed his ideas to incubate, and that during this incubating period he found that the germ might easily develop into a duck or a drake. Since each bird seemed desirable and being loth to lose either he retained both. Here are the two themes, which I have written in the same key in order that their similarity may be more easily compared:



A similar instance of a twin-growth occurs in the Kreutzer Sonata of Beethoven. In the finale (which was originally written for the earlier Sonata in A major) occurs this tune—



built upon the notes of the common chord. While in the first movement occurs the following—

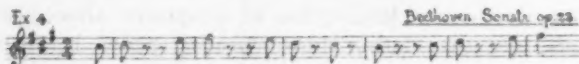


also built upon the notes of the common chord. Now, this tune is said on the authority of Carl Czerny to be taken from a work of Kreutzer himself. If this is really so, then we have to explain the similarity to the other tune as (1) a coincidence, or (2) that Beethoven had known the tune of Kreutzer for some years and had used, in this previously written finale, a variant of it which he had probably discovered during an extemporisation.

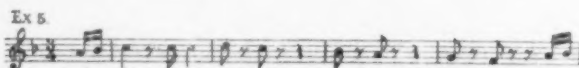
That Beethoven often consciously or unconsciously developed ideas previously used is shown by a comparison of the following works: Pianoforte Sonata in G major (2nd movement). Pianoforte Concerto in E flat (2nd movement). Violin Sonata in G major (2nd movement, third theme). Pianoforte Sonata, op. 110 (1st movement). Sometimes twin themes appear, similar in outline, but

(1) Compare the little minuet which Holmes, in his life of Mozart (1845 edn., p. 10) gives as having been composed when he was four years old.—[Ed.]

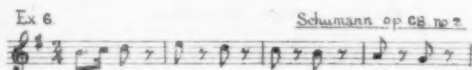
different in rhythm. For instance in the second movement of the A minor Sonata for Violin we meet the following tune :



while in the scherzo of the F major Violin Sonata we meet it again slightly disguised by a change of rhythm :

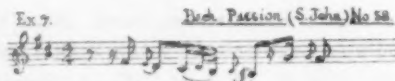


Perhaps there is some folk-song from which both are derived, an explanation which is made the more acceptable by the fact that the tune occurs almost note for note in Schumann's *Album for the Young*, No. 2.



Let us now examine some instances of twin inspirations, drawn not from one composer but from two.

I have said previously that it is quite possible for two men in similar moods to express themselves in similar phrases. The first pair I produce are from Bach and Beethoven. In the ' St. John ' Passion Bach writes the following phrase in No. 11 :



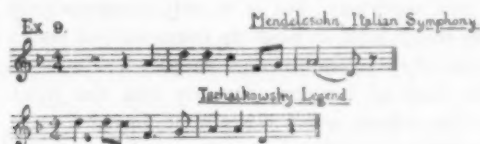
which he also used again in No. 58, 'All is fulfilled.' Now did Beethoven know the ' St. John ' Passion? I should think that it is more than probable that he did not, so that the appearance of this phrase of Bach in the Sonata in A flat, op. 110, is simply a coincidence :



As all musicians know, there are many themes in Beethoven's music which seem to be improvements upon the work of his predecessors,

e.g., the *Eroica* Symphony (1st theme), which closely resembles Mozart's *Bastien et Bastienne* overture; the Eighth Symphony (finale), which Sir George Grove points out is a vigorous version of a tune of Haydn. There is also another Beethoven-Haydn twin, which may be less known, namely, the tune in the finale of Beethoven's Violin Sonata in A major and the adagio of Haydn's Symphony in E flat.

Another instance of dual inspiration was brought to my notice by chance. I was playing on the organ one evening to some friends who, though knowledgeable musicians, were quite unfamiliar with Mendelssohn's symphonies. When therefore I had played the 'Pilgrims' March' from the latter's Italian symphony, they asked if I had been extemporising upon Tchaikowsky's song 'The Legend.' Comparing the two, it is easy to understand their mistake.



Finally, there is a curious similarity between a tune in the opera 'Rigoletto' of Verdi and a folk-song used by Frederick Delius in his 'Appalachia' variations.



It is unlikely that the North American folk-singers knew Verdi's music, and it is equally unlikely that Verdi knew the North American folk-song, therefore we are driven to the conclusion that the similarity of these two tunes is simply a coincidence.

That such coincidences do exist and that their origin is without blemish or dishonour is established beyond a doubt. Even so, I fear that any glaring similarity between a production of to-day and a masterpiece of yesterday will be viewed with suspicion, so that if any young composer has a symphony in his portfolio which shares any tunes with Beethoven's Fifth Symphony he will have some difficulty in persuading his audience that Beethoven's only claim to superiority is to have been born a hundred or so years previously.

A. E. BRENT SMITH.

SOME VICTORIAN SONGS

THE advent of broadcasting may not be an unmixed blessing to music, and there are no doubt many complaints to be heard from those to whom music is a trade rather than an art. But there are many compensations, such as the multitude of chances that are now being given to young singers; chances of being heard without the heavy payments that, not so long ago, made it impossible for many well-qualified singers to get a hearing from the public. These are now set free from the obligation of singing rubbish, and are at liberty to make their own repertory; but it is only comparatively few of them who will take the trouble to hunt up unhackneyed songs that will suit their voice and style. The average singing-master is far too busy to attempt this kind of research for any but the most advanced of his pupils; the others must content themselves with giving faint copies of interpretations that have pleased the public. It is probably too soon to congratulate ourselves on the death of the 'shop song,' but that pernicious invention has undoubtedly lost much of its power, and there are many signs that tell of an increase in the appreciative powers of audiences, even of the vast unseen audience among the listeners-in. May we not hope that some of the clever candidates for eminence in broadcasting will turn their attention to reviving the best of their country's vocal music, not in the antiquarian mood of those who think that what is old is necessarily good, but because there are a great number of songs that have been widely popular in days gone by? Some, like Arne's lovely 'Water parted from the sea,' must have been 'best sellers' in the time of 'She Stoops to Conquer,' where that song is quoted as one of the 'genteelst of tunes.' Some, like Rockstro's 'Queen and Huntress,' or Bennett's 'May Dew,' have certainly not deserved the oblivion which seems to have overtaken them, and there is one of about the same date, Loder's 'I heard a Brooklet gushing,' which many people are not ashamed to confess that they think more beautiful than Schubert's 'Wohin?' set to the same words, just as they would claim for Loewe's 'Erlkönig' the right to exist in the same world as Schubert's famous song. Loder's lovely music might very easily be associated with the German original, for which it was in all probability composed.

Even some of the 'best sellers' of the past, though not quite untarnished by the ballad-concert associations, might well be occasionally

revived, such as Clay's 'She wandered down the mountain side'; it would hardly be too bold an experiment to venture on 'The Sands of Dee,' or on Hatton's 'To Anthea,' now that the singers identified with these songs are no longer to be heard. I suppose that Clay's 'I'll sing thee songs of Araby' has never ceased to attract the attention of the average tenor, but such songs as the best of Clay's would surely be pleasant to hear as well as to sing in the present day, and after all, listeners-in are debarred from the relief of expressing disapproval in any way that can be immediately felt by the performer. No doubt, the attempt to revive such trash as 'Gentle Zitella,' 'She wore a wreath of roses,' or 'Nancy Lee' would provoke many protests in the *Radio Times* or *The Listener*, but it is curious that there still exist organists who, with the aid of the 'nux vomica' stop, are accustomed to draw tears from large congregations with a certain dreadful piece of sentimentality based on the first of these, though accredited to Batiste.

The taste for songs of what used to be called the 'doorsteps and angels' type, with a triplet accompaniment at the end to represent heaven, has happily passed, together with the popularity of the contemporary form, the ballad with a valse refrain. But some of the better songs of Blumenthal would be worth hearing again, and it must be remembered that all these productions, whether musical rubbish or not, are very easy to sing effectively, if only young singers can be induced not to try and put too much into them. Not very long ago a clever young singer, full of intelligence and the determination to interpret everything with a great deal of 'meaning,' made a conspicuous failure of Goring Thomas's 'Summer Night'; she failed entirely to catch the mood of artificial sentiment which the composer's contemporaries were accustomed to exhibit in its interpretation; and indeed it is a more or less open secret that that popular song was intended as a parody on the ballads that were then in vogue, only the parody was so clever that everyone accepted it as genuine. This, like many of Maude White's early songs, such as 'The Devout Lover' and 'Absent yet Present,' has never quite passed from the ken of the more accomplished amateurs, though some beautiful things from the same lady's pen are never to be heard nowadays.

Among the early productions of men destined to be famous, there are not a few which are so beautiful and spontaneous that one wonders why singers are not perpetually singing them. Stanford's 'Püppchen fein,' from a set of Heine songs, and his 'Belle Dame sans Mercy' seem now to be banished from the concert-room, and the latter to be so forgotten that an eminent critic recently committed himself to the very doubtful statement that Keats's poem had never been adequately set to music. The exquisite songs that Parry wrote, some when he

was a schoolboy, are happily accessible in Novello's complete edition of his 'English Lyrics,' but why should we not be allowed to hear his ingenuous 'More fond than cushat dove' or 'Why does azure deck the sky?' And we have as yet no prohibition in this country which should prevent the occasional performance of 'Fill me, boy, as deep a draught.' Somervell's 'When Fairyland was young' is one of the most 'grateful' things a soprano can have to sing; Hadow's 'Bright is the ring of words,' Aikin's 'Sigh no more, ladies,' C. A. Lidgey's 'Earl Bristol's Farewell,' are perfect musical settings of immortal words.

These are a few names of songs that would be widely popular, and the main obstacle in the way of singers who might wish to know them is the difficulty of finding out where some of them are published. In the old days when the firm of Stanley Lucas and Weber was in existence, one could be sure of finding good songs, wheresoever they might be published; but London still lacks a shop where the wares of all the publishing firms can be seen, or at least the catalogues referred to. It often happens, too, that when publishing firms disappear, their property passes by purchase from one house to another, and there is 'no knowing' how they are to be bought by the outside public. But it would not be very difficult for some of the young singers of the present day, while waiting for engagements, to hunt up these and other things in the British Museum, and then to try to trace the present whereabouts of the copyrights. One piece of very obnoxious trouble they will be spared, for it is highly improbable that any of the songs I have mentioned suffer from the activities of the Performing Rights Society.

J. A. FULLER-MAITLAND.

REGISTER OF BOOKS ON MUSIC

The following list contains a selection of recent books on music. Unless otherwise stated the year of publication is 1930. All prices quoted are net, and in the case of foreign books the price given is that at which the cheapest edition can be purchased in the country in which the book is published. As a rough guide the values to the nearest farthing at par of exchange are here given:—Dollar, 4s. 1½d.; Drachma, ½d.; Florin (Dutch), 1s. 7½d.; Franc (French), 2d., (Belgian), 1½d., (Swiss), 9½d.; Lira, 2½d.; Mark (Finnish), 1½d., (German), 11½d.; Krone, 1s. 1½d.; Peseta, 9½d.; Rupee, 1s. 6d.; Schilling, 7d.; Zloty, 5½d.

Acoustics. Karg-Elert, Sigfrid: *Akustische Ton-, Klang- und Funktionsbestimmung*. Die Polarität der naturgegebenen Ton- und Klangproportionen. Ein Beitrag zu jeder Lehre von der Harmonik in musikalischen Akustik. pp. iv. 104. C. M. Rothe: Leipzig. 6 M.

Aesthetics. Anschütz, G.: *Abriss der Musikästhetik* pp. x. 196. Breitkopf. 5 M.

Schlesinger, M.: *Grundlagen und Geschichte des Symbols*. Ein Versuch. Kap. 8. Symbolik in der Tonkunst. pp. 80. J. Bard: Berlin. 5 M. [The completing section of the author's 'Geschichte des Symbols,' the first vol. of which was published in 1912.]

Aesthetics. See also under Rhythm.

Appenzeller. See under Ducs.

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C. B. O

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Spontini: par Ch. Bouvet. *Claude Debussy*: par M. Boucher. Paris, Editions Rieder. pp. 100 and 84. Fcs. 20 un volume.

Each in its way, these two new members of an admirable series maintain their standard admirably. To the good features to which attention was drawn here in the case of the *Gabriel Fauré* volume are now added bibliographies (including in the case of Spontini our 'Grove,' which is Spitta) and synoptic tables of compositions.

The subjects form an interesting contrast. If nothing very novel is revealed about Spontini, it is true to say that what was known before is new to this generation and that M. Bouvet uses his material with skill and effect. We may not remember that the opera *La Vestale* (1807) was genuinely acclaimed again in 1906; or that its composer in 1845 assured one Richard Wagner that there was nothing more to be done in that way, since all possible discoveries had been made and handled by himself: 'tout le reste ne vaut rien.' It is significant of Spontini's admitted achievement and position that Wagner should have risked the reply. But perhaps it was as a fighter for his art that Wagner respected him.

For a fighter and an adventurer Spontini was, although his third Christian name was Pacifico. He seems to have been a very fine conductor of his own works, and of other composers to have especially favoured Mozart. To his contemporary artists he was not all that a Pacifico might have been. But since he reigned among them, albeit on tottering thrones, in Rome, Naples, Venice, Paris and Berlin from, say, 1799 to 1847, he was clearly one who counted. Moreover, some of his portraits suggest a strong facial resemblance to Robert Burns; and he once visited England about an operatic work on Milton.

From a facile worker he became laborious, and a good deal too conscientious for his singers and producers. More truly cosmopolitan than Mendelssohn, he was less amiable and to that was probably due the absence of recorded contacts with some of those musicians who are now more in our minds during Spontini's period than he is himself. But he was, in fact, prominent all the time, and M. Bouvet gives a clear account of him.

In treating Debussy, M. Boucher has a harder and an easier task: he has a more recent, familiar subject, and one at the same time more inherently elusive.

Perhaps to treat Debussy's work (almost nothing appears of his 'life') psychologically was the right way. The published work lies within 1876-1915; the life contained only seventeen years outside that period; and the worker was 'un solitaire et un taciturne.' M. Boucher, therefore, dealing with his subject under 'Introduction,' 'Avant,' 'Lui,' 'Après,' and 'Conclusion' tends to achieve an impression of the man as a sublimation of his work. If you are to go with M. Boucher you must have the gift of 'la Présence' implanted in you. Otherwise he cannot be expected to make you appreciate Debussy.

This is well enough, if one can carry it off. And the author's effort is so consistent as to deserve success. To one lingering this side idolatry, well, Debussy wrote some things of haunting charm; he was 'àpre au travail'—one of the very few 'personal' notes in the book—and if a reader can go with M. Boucher he will have had access to an earnest exposition of a composer whom France still mourns.

It is only just to commend once more the excellence of the illustrations in the volumes of this series. Various relevant, they are beautifully reproduced and presented with great skill.

W. M. M.

La Musique et les Musiciens de l'Ancien Pays de Liège. By Antoine Auda. Large post 4to (10½ × 8). Pp. 292, with 19 plates. Price 17s. (unbound). Liège, Librairie Salésienne, 59, Rue des Wallons. 1930.

M. Auda is an enthusiastic Belgian scholar who has found in the musical records of Liège an unusually rich field for exploration. There are few centres which can rival it in the wealth and the continuity of its musical history, and the tale as it is unfolded to us in this handsome volume reflects great credit on the Pays, on its musicians, and on their historian. The sub-title runs 'A bio-bibliographical essay on Liégeois Music from its origins up to the end of the Principality (1800)', and we therefore expect to find in it facts rather than fancies. This is the case; and for that reason the book serves as a model for the way in which local musical histories may be written. The value of such works is that the 'man on the spot' is able to find out, and present to the world at large, a collected and sorted mass of material, a gift of great value to the science of musical history and criticism as a whole: though it will seldom be possible to collect from one locality such an extensive range of historical and biographical matters.

For English readers, the only point of national interest is on page 124, where we find that Daman or Damon, composer of one of the best and scarcest of sixteenth century metrical psalters, is shown to be Liège-born. But fortunately our tastes are not so insular, and we can follow the story of music's development in this quarter of Belgium with delight. Of the later musicians, Hamal and Du Mont are the outstanding figures, with Grétry to finish the period (he died in 1813): of the earlier, Bishop Stephen (850-920) is a very notable personage. Nineteen plates of various kinds round off the book, and transcriptions of the four which contain mediæval notation are provided; these include the solution of a nerve-racking Puzzle-Canon, written by the ingenious tormentor upon a chess-board. The date of this offence is not given, but it looks from the facsimile to be seventeenth century, by which time composers ought to have known better.

ANSELM HUGHES, O.S.B.

The Kettledrums. By P. R. Kirby. Oxford University Press. 6s. net.

This book divides into two parts: the historical, which is a slightly amplified form of an article which appeared in MUSIC AND LETTERS in January, 1928; and the practical, about three times as long, which is of great interest to drummers, and well worth the notice of composers, conductors, music publishers, and members of an audience. The historical part might have been fuller; we could have dispensed with the desultory references in literature to various kinds of drums, and should have welcomed a careful account of Bantu drumming,

of the Ashanti drum-language, and of Indian rhythmic counterpoint, which is, as far as is at present known, unique. But the practical part is absorbing. We have all at some time longed to know what passes in the drummer's mind who, after 101 bars of 'tacet,' puts down his newspaper, gives two whacks, and picks it up again. We learn to distinguish these whacks—the fortepiano, open beat, paradiddle, flam, drag, ruff. 'Fingering,' i.e., which stick on which drum, is made clear; details are gone into—how to put on a 'head,' various kinds of stick, tuning apparatus, how to care for and how to pack the drum, with a little science thrown in about the Chladni plates and the harmonics they make visible. The short bibliography would have been more useful to those who wish to hunt up the books in a library if the initials of the authors had been given.

A. H. F. S.

Violin Technique. By Sydney Robjohns. Oxford University Press. 5s.

Rather a price to pay, perhaps, for a hundred small pages, but the good sense, the clear writing, and the plenty of musical illustrations are worth it. Most difficulties seem to be met, as far as a book can meet them, without minimising them, but with cheerfulness and hope. There is one perhaps, that a member of the audience would like to understand. Why is it that violinists are so heavy on unaccented parts of the bar with their up-bow? 'Cellists are much better. Is it the weight of the bow, or a miscalculation of length, or taking the wrong number of bows, or what? You hear it most in an orchestra; sometimes it gets on the nerves. However, one is pretty sure that readers of this book will find out for themselves how not to do it.

A. H. F. S.

Cosima Wagner. By Richard Count Du Moulin-Eckart. Translated from the German by Catherine Alison Phillips. Introduction by Ernest Newman. 2 vols. Knopf. 42s.

A life of Cosima Wagner may have been wanted as a useful addition to English musical literature, but half a life, which takes no account of her activities at Bayreuth in her widowhood, given in two bulky, wordy and expensive volumes, is a luxury most musicians will probably decide to do without. Too much of Count Du Moulin-Eckart's book is only another biography of Wagner, and one hardly seen from a new point of view, since it deals with the woman whose chief attraction for Wagner was her unquestioning adoration. In any case, there is no such thing for a writer as a personal attitude in the Wagnerian circle to which this author belongs. Its devotees have always had to submit their interpretation of the documents to the Bayreuth censorship; in fact, the documents are only accessible on that condition, though it may never have been expressly stipulated. Like Glasenapp, Houston Chamberlain, Wolzogen and the rest, Count Du Moulin-Eckart is, as he himself says, under a 'sacred obligation.' Thus his readers are amused, when they are not irritated, to find that the man who has all the evidence cannot put it forward impartially without labouring under a sense of disloyalty, not to say risking ostracism.

No wonder that this biography becomes at times hopelessly obscure, and not seldom disingenuous. The whole Munich episode, where Hans and Cosima von Bülow enact their triangular drama with Wagner, gives

the impression of having been deliberately muddled, and when Cosima writes her appeal to King Ludwig for a word that will save her honour as a wife and a mother, the author, though he lets us know somewhere that she is also a prospective mother, would calmly allow us to assume that Bülow is the prospective father. For those who know the facts the result is that what he tries to turn into heroics becomes a farce, which is the more to be deplored because with a little more courage he might have let his readers see the real tragedy of the situation, as elsewhere he often comes near to doing.

Count Du Moulin-Eckart's besetting fault, at any rate in the eyes of English readers, is an utter lack of humour. That, of course, is only to be expected from anyone connected with Bayreuth, and it must be said to fit Cosima as well as the rest of the Wagner clan. How well author and subject agree in this respect may be judged from such a sentence as this: 'She was deeply moved by Carlyle's eulogy of Goethe, because it also "applied so absolutely to Richard."' Plodding through these solemn pages, one is grateful for such amusement as may be picked up, though at the author's expense; nevertheless, one cannot help asking why so much word-spinning should have gone to the making of a biography—half a biography—which in the end leaves one with a confused impression of facts revealed so that other facts may be the better hidden. It seems a pity, too, to expend so much volubility over a woman the finest thing in whose life was, after all, the silence she could maintain, once she had grown accustomed to being attacked.

The most valuable portions of the book are those dealing with Cosima's girlhood and first marriage, where the author is free to tell the plain story of a remarkable and noble young personality. Mrs. Alison Phillips's translation is fluent and very rarely cramped by any attempt at too literal a rendering. Now and again, where she conscientiously gives the original wording in brackets, one feels that she might have got nearer to the author's meaning without spoiling her diction. Thus, on page 344, 'art is a great sacrilege' would have been better (for 'Frevel') than 'a great curse,' and (*ibid.*) 'Er taumelte förmlich hinaus' is not 'he rushed wildly out of the room,' but rather something like 'he fairly staggered (or tottered) out.' But such small discrepancies are rare and one would rather have them than the kind of straitjacketed English that used to be thought good enough for musical books so long as it followed a German original into the innermost convolutions of a tortuous sentence.

E. B.

Conducting and orchestral routine. By Frank Estes Kendrie. New York: The H. W. Gray Co. \$1.00.

After watching a number of different conductors at work one is left wondering whether there is any method in their art. Each one seems to be a law unto himself and to contradict in at least half a dozen ways the means employed by any other conductor. And yet each one has the appearance of being in complete control and able to make his own synthesis of colour, accent and pace. How, then, among so many conflicting methods, each equally successful in obtaining adequately exact renderings, will it be possible to lay down rules? Conducting is a young art, and its literature is as yet small. Weingartner's book is a classic. Adrian Boult's *Handbook on the technique of conducting* (1920) is the most concise to date, the best

guide for students, fifteen pages of keen observation put down in plain terms. The author of the useful booklet under review clearly agrees as to the value of Boulton's Handbook, for he quotes from it more liberally than from any other source, and plans his book on the same lines. Boulton's Handbook is, as far as we know, only available for R.C.M. students, while Frank Estes Kendrie's is public property. For the rest Kendrie does not add anything, more than elaboration, to Boulton. The diagrams are clear. On page 6 the term 'tone' is used where 'volume' is meant; conductors cannot indicate quality of tone, but volume they can. (The paragraph shows that the author means this, but he has allowed the wrong term to stand.) The main message this book has for ordinary concert-goers is that the conductor's work is never seen, for it takes place in rehearsal. In ideal conditions of adequate rehearsal and close and lengthy contact of one set of players and one conductor this is the case. At the performance a conductor, his work already done and tested, should only be present as a watcher, ready in emergency to steady things. We seldom get that here, but when a conductor brings his own orchestra we see it. Boulton, writing in 1920, says that there is 'little chance of making a living out of conducting' (probably things are different in America, or Kendrie would have said the same). All that the young English conductor can hope for is that from time to time he may be pitchforked in to fill a gap. He will then find himself faced with a body of players as unknown to him as he to them, and must do what he can, in a three hours rehearsal for a two hours programme, to get things in order. A book such as this will help him to know what to aim for, in those three hours, and what to pass by.

Sc. G.

Fugue writing. By A. Madeley Richardson. New York: The H. W. Gray Co. \$1.50.

The full title is 'Helps to fugue writing.' The book contains examples of fugues written bar for bar, modulation for modulation, on the plan of two of Bach's Wohltemperirtes Klavier, but on new subjects. Thus closely to copy a classic has, according to the author, the useful effect of acquainting the student with the best methods of construction. That is probably right. The main question, however, raised by this book is whether it is possible (see Preface) to 'deduce rules and guides to lead the way to successful fugue writing' by going to the '48.' Fux and Cherubini have tried to map out the land, but no one has followed them. J. S. Bach is one magnificent collection of individualities. He neither followed nor formulated any rules. (It is significant, in this respect, that 'Kunst der Fuge' is not his title for the work now known under that name (Spitta, II 678), and that he seemed to consider the collection as exercises in counterpoint (Parry, 531) rather than in fugue form.) To deduce rules from the '48' therefore is hazardous, and as it happens Dr. Richardson refrains from doing this except in the case of the Answer, where the difference between 'tonal' and 'real' allows for some slight, albeit superficial, crystallisation. The dictum of a distinguished authority (C. H. Kitson: *The elements of fugal construction*; see *MUSIC AND LETTERS*, April, 1930, p. 199) that there 'are very few, if any, absolute rules, and that, as regards details of construction, the principles are very elastic,' is worth bearing in mind by those who seek an exact method.

This book is best when dealing with analysis, either of a complete fugue or of details of exposition.

Sc. G.

An hour with American music. By Paul Rosenfeld. London: The J. B. Lippincott Co. 4s. 6d. net.

This short book introduces the reader to some new names, and makes the introduction in so lively a manner that at the end of it all there remains a feeling that these American composers are full of energy and many of them as full of originality. Discounting something for the author's natural inclination towards the work of his own countrymen (a bias that shows itself in the needlessly harsh handling of Antheil, who lives abroad), and his laudable determination to find creative work in America that is pure in strain, there is much useful information here. Starting from MacDowell, who seems to European ears to be continually trying to interpret the wide-open spaces of a new continent by means of scraps of notes picked out of the waste-paper baskets of Wagner and Grieg, we gradually work through a number of smaller composers until within sight of those whom the author considers as leaders to-day: Dane Rudhyar who owes something to Scriabin, Roger Sessions who has felt the influence of Stravinsky, Adolph Weiss (Schönberg), Virgil Thomson (Satie), and Leo Ornstein (of Russian origin). Finally, there are the most important of to-day: Roy Harris (who seems to be well grounded in folk-song), Aaron Copland (evidently careful of his means, eschewing the romantic), Carlos Chavez (from Mexico, said to be influenced by the ancient lore of his people), and Edgar Varèse. The book, thus, is a crescendo with Varèse as climax, for in him the author sees the finest fruit of present-day American music. The next thing for us is to hear this music which is made so attractive here. One of the difficulties in dealing with this subject is to decide where to put the dividing line between what is, and what is not, pure American. How many generations are to pass before a composer is true-blood? If 'Rudhyar was a youth, and Loeffler a full-grown man, when they arrived in the States,' as the author allows, shall they be called American? Not that it matters: the men are composers and musicians, and there the matter may be left. But if native talent, as such, is what we are after, the problem of American creative art presents some difficulties. For instance, if you claim Henry James as an American author (as this writer does, unless he means James senior, in which case it would be as well to specify) why not also mention, in a study of American composers, Arthur Bliss?

Sc. G.

Panorama de la Radio. By M. André Cœuroy. Edition KRA. 16 fcs. 50.

This book covers an astonishing field in small compass and raises questions of considerable moment. Broadcasting in a very short space has become of immense importance to industry, literature, education and art—particularly the art of music. *Panorama de la Radio*, written by a distinguished French musical critic, is a survey of all these aspects. It gives a very great deal of information as to what has been done in each all over the world and has much to say on what ought to be done in the future.

A merry opening chapter deals with the physiology of the

'Sensiliste'—entertaining phrase for the horrible American 'radio fan.' Then follows a technical interpolation by another author which seems quite out of place. Chapter 3 comes back to business with 'Radio and International Life' which describes the radio organisations of the various countries, statistical details of stations, listeners and international organisations, and discusses the rights of authors, performers and listeners.

Next we have 'Radio and Intellectual Life,' which deals with educational broadcasting for schools and the general public; with announcers; and with reporting and news service.

Chapter 5 concerns 'Radio and Art,' sub-divided into music, theatre, and literature and criticism.

A short final chapter is headed 'The Autonomy of Radio' and pleads for its independence, that it may grow as a creative art. This last is the burden of the treatise and it is a matter of very great importance.

It is brought out in the chapter on musical broadcasting in which it is urged that the attempts to reproduce classical works, especially those for large orchestras performed in public halls, are unsatisfactory and should be avoided. The author goes into detail as to what instruments reproduce well and what do not, and asks for music specially written for radio, taking these facts into account. These, however, are difficulties which will tend to solve themselves with the general improvement in technique which is still going on. The recent 'paraphase' method of amplification, for example, which has greatly improved reproduction, has already been tried by the B.B.C. experimentally at the transmitting end and found to be a very real advance. Loud speakers are the source of the greatest part of the distortion which still exists and they are steadily improving.

M. Cœuroy may count on something very near perfect reproduction in the near future, allowing always for the fact that to be perfect the reproduction must be life size. A theoretically perfect miniature of a full orchestra at a volume suitable for a small room will not produce the same effect upon the ear as life-sized reproduction in a large hall, and to this extent, only chamber music can ever be really suited to the chamber. But broadcasting must allow for such life-sized reproduction, whether in the music salons of the very rich or in public halls in remote towns and villages which it is to be hoped will before long equip themselves with first-class powerful reproducing apparatus.

Much the most important section of this book musically, is that which deals with the special possibilities of radio as an art medium. For example, there is the ability to produce the tone quality of a whisper, of mezzo voce, or of pianissimo playing, at any desired volume relatively to the accompaniment. Thus a violin concerto may be written and played with the fullest delicacy of a solo performance, but by placing the player nearer the microphone he can still dominate the orchestra. Instruments naturally weak in tone can be brought to any desired strength in ensemble playing either throughout the performance or in certain passages only. In fact, it is obvious that a new power has been placed in the hands of composer and conductor by this simple possibility alone, without going into the question of filters which increase, diminish or remove frequencies above or below a certain pre-determined value and so alter completely the timbre of the instrument as reproduced.

In this connection M. Cœuroy may not have encountered the method which can be adopted in gramophone reproduction, by which the deficiency in sound intensity in the lower registers, deliberately made in the recording by reason of the need for economy of space on the record, can be counteracted, and the bass which has been lost in recording can be reintroduced in reproduction.

An excellent book, intensely serious and important in aim, but entirely humorous and satirical in manner.

H. R. RIVERS-MOORE.

Proceedings of the Musical Association. 56th Session, 1929-30. Whitehead & Miller, Leeds. 21s.

The Musical Association, as we are reminded annually by the publication of the Proceedings, was founded 'for the investigation and discussion of subjects connected with the art and science of music.' In the six papers read before the Association in the course of the past season, and here republished, questions of art and of science are properly blended. There is no mere æsthetic luxuriating, nor any dry expounding of technicalities for their own sake. Learning is directed towards the satisfaction of taste and enthusiasm, which in music is its only justification. There are discussions, too, at the end of each lecture, not always to the point when read in cold print, but often stimulating. Twice, when the President, Professor Dent, is in the chair, they take the form of vital contributions.

The papers in which art and science consort most happily are that on the songs of Dowland by the Rev. Dr. Fellowes and that on Italian instrumental music of the 16th century by Mr. Gerald Cooper, both of them thoughtful studies which cover their ground and discover unsuspected growths on it. Mr. S. Kennedy North's discussion of the Northumbrian small-pipes and Dr. Henry Farmer's of music in mediæval Scotland have a bias towards the scientific, as such special subjects of a restricted æsthetic appeal are bound to do. They deal so thoroughly with unfamiliar matter that their preservation in print is a very real gain to musical literature. The appreciations of Paul Hindemith by Miss Marion Scott and of Verdi by Mr. Francis Toye, on the other hand, being records of personal reactions, cannot be expected to maintain the same permanence; but as lectures both are excellent and both have an individual touch that appeals:—the former the humour of a critic who judges generously but can deal a shrewd thrust, the latter a passionate conviction that he is right in his admiration of a great man.

E. B.

Grundlagen einer musikalischen Volksliedforschung. By Hans Merzmann. Kistner & Siegel, Leipzig.

This is a reprint in book form of a series of enquiries into the nature of folksong, first published separately in the *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*. On the face of it there seems to be little call for its discussion here, since it deals exclusively with German folksong, which, compared with the British treasury, is both poor in quality and lacking in variety. To the English musician the material handled by the learned author is of interest only in so far as it bears upon the classics, and that is an aspect upon which he scarcely touches.

Nevertheless, the book must be put on record as the first serious attempt to analyse folksong thoroughly and scientifically from the

musical point of view. The aim of this treatise is not historical research, which it takes merely as a basis, but the investigation of the artistic qualities of the people's songs. After a chapter devoted to the cataloguing of tunes that should be noted by folksong societies for its many practical hints, the author first examines in detail the problems raised by his researches. He then goes on to a comparison of the different versions of eight typical songs, discussing in one case no less than twenty-nine variants, and concludes with a chapter on the organism of folksong, where he deals separately with such factors as form, textual content and style. When he comes to style, it is clear that he has some difficulty in determining how to separate it from melody, rhythm, form and whatever other features he may have scrutinised earlier in the book—features which are surely all matters of style. One is a little disappointed to find in the end that after all this vivisection the heart has stopped beating just as one felt almost in contact with it. As in his remarkable *Angewandte Musikästhetik*, Hans Mersmann, in spite of his extraordinarily ingenious method of analysis, which lays bare all sorts of hidden technicalities, does not really tell us what it is that makes one piece of music good and another bad. It is even possible to feel that he is not interested in questions of taste. When he does once in a way make a pronouncement on quality, it is felt to be purely arbitrary, as when he prefers the version of one song that ends on the tonic to another that closes on the third, which latter might be regarded not only as melodically more original, but as more promising in its harmonic implications.

Perhaps it is as well that music's innermost secrets are to be discovered by intuition rather than by analysis. What is certain is that German folk-tunes are more leniently treated by a method of research that is scientific first and æsthetic only incidentally, since a too nicely discriminative approach towards them would make their eternal tonic-and-dominant lay-out, their frequent four-square rhythms, their almost exclusive disregard of modal formations and comparatively rare exchange of minor for major, their general monotony of mood and melodic cut, seem not a little exasperating.

'All songs transmitted by the people are folksongs,' says Mersmann, meaning all songs of an immediate popular appeal, by whomsoever made and at whatsoever time. If that be true for German music, it accounts for its curious indigence in folksongs of outstanding merit. Germany has by far the greatest literature of art songs and cultivates that species most extensively. This means that nowhere else have such large quantities of indifferent vocal music been turned out, simply in a normal proportion to valuable music, and—this is the real point—been taken seriously. A public devoted to music both by inclination and by education, but neither more nor less sure in its tastes than a people as a whole is anywhere else, is only too eager to take to its heart whatever song is going, and naturally takes with the greatest alacrity what conforms to ready-made conventions and voices plain sentiments.

Other countries, where folksong has run in a furrow once or twice removed from that of art music, escaped this weakening influence upon it, and there are instances where the position is reversed and folk music can actually invigorate the output of composers, as in Russia in the last century and in England to-day. There is no folk music that offers a more fascinating study to a scholar of Hans Mersmann's attainments than that of the British Isles, and it is much

to be hoped that such a scholar will before long be found to write an English work on the lines of this valuable German book. Owing to the infinitely greater diversity of the material, his task will be much more complicated than that undertaken by the eminent German author, who in his final paragraph disclaims having done more than paved the way for further studies. Those who read him attentively will probably say that he is all too modest—that his book is an achievement in itself rather than a 'foundation.' At any rate, the serious student of folksong could find no better guide to investigations of his own than Hans Mersmann.

E. B.

Claudio Monteverdi. By G. Francesco Malipiero. Milan: Fratelli Treves. Lire 80.

The more of Monteverdi's music that is made available the clearer does it become that beyond all consideration of novelty and daring in the uses of harmony or the management of voices and instruments the music itself, as an expression of the whole range of emotions, is of immense power. Gesualdo was a greater colourist, Giovanni Gabrieli a bolder instrumental composer. But neither are to be compared with Monteverdi as composers, nor come, as he does, within the circle of the great creative artists. Even the little amount of his music that can be drawn on at present shows this, though when the great definitive edition, which we understand is to appear under the editorship of Signor Malipiero, has been completed the richness and variety of Monteverdi as a composer will be evident. The volume before us is probably issued as herald to that edition, for the short introductory essay which precedes the reprints of letters, prefaces and dedications, as well as plates illustrating original title pages, has besides many thought-provoking notes that deal with aspects of the æsthetic of Monteverdi's works, certain others that have to do with sources and with technicalities of barring such as an editor would naturally wish to make plain. The life is hardly dealt with here. For that recourse can be had to Davari and Prunières. As the author justly says, with an eye on more pressing needs: 'He who shall republish the complete works of Claudio Monteverdi, with no vandalistic disfigurements, or amplifications, avoiding arbitrary restorations and corrections, he it is who will write the finest life of the *divino Claudio*.' Apart from the author's forty pages of introduction the book contains in handy form most of the contemporary material bearing on the music (Artusi is mentioned, though his criticisms, too long for anything but a fresh volume, are only generally commented on), and a complete reprint of the letters, 119 to the 53 printed by Prunières.

Sc. G.

A book of the Basques. By Rodney Gallop. Macmillan. 15s. net.

In an age when, to the ordinary onlooker, ethnography seems to be leaving none of the secrets of the earth's races, their origin and customs, undiscovered, there yet remains the Basque country. The musician knows of it for its folk-songs and dances and for the fact that Maurice Ravel was born at Ciboure. This informative book deals illuminatingly with the folk-songs, though it does not appear to mention the modern musician. But it mentions a lot of other things, origins, language, folk-dance, games, domestic art, being a

few of them. This Basque country that is not a country, half in France, half in Spain, must be, as the author suggests, a clear case of racial persistence. Otherwise it is difficult to explain how its people could have escaped the conflicting claims of neighbouring nationalities, unless by an intense race consciousness of their own which kept them aloof from temporal disturbances by acute demarcation of character and habits that drew them apart from their neighbours while it correspondingly formed them into a compact sensitive residue. Whither this residue came, from Asia or Africa, is discussed by the author, with some amusing notes on theories which have 'been consigned to the scrap-heap.' He asks the reader to take it 'as axiomatic, or at least accepted as a working hypothesis, that the Basques are the oldest race surviving in Europe,' which is something of a gobblet of information to swallow whole. Musical readers will turn to the chapters on folk-song, folk-tales and folk-dance. These, though not by any means these only, make the book worth getting. The Basques have been great travellers, or rather voyagers, and their folk-music shows traces of influence from France and Spain (naturally), and from the British Isles (less expectedly), in the same way that their language does. But as in the Basque language intrusion from foreign parts is of small importance besides the main body of pure-strained vocabulary and idiom, so it is the less adulterated tunes quoted by the author that have the most character. Music and dances we have been able to make some acquaintance with at the Albert Hall. But it is only necessary to read the account in this book of the native open-air plays (*Pastorales*) to realise that the country itself must be visited. And quickly, for the author allows no delusions about the despoiling touch of *tourisme* which reaches out from Biarritz and San Sebastian.

Sc. G.

Bela Bartók. Ein Beitrag zur Morphologie der neun Musik. Von Edwin von der Nüll. Halle: Mitteldeutsche Verlags-A-G.
La vie de Claude Debussy. Par Jean Lépine. Paris: Albin Michel. 15 fr.

These two books, approaching music from opposite sides, between them cover the whole field that is open to literary treatment, one of them dealing solely with aspects of the music that Bartók has written, the other giving an intimate pen portrait of the life Debussy lived. Neither trespasses on the domains mapped out by the other. The author of the book on Bartók is a type of the scientific musicologist, though few of that species have his ability for presenting matter in an attractive form. It is possible to read his pages with something near to eagerness, and his clarity of style allows a reasonably quick grasp of the subject. It is the pianoforte works that form the material of this enquiry, a restricted method that the author defends convincingly. Since the beginning of his career as a composer Bartók has continually turned to the pianoforte for the working out of his ideas, and a survey of his music for that instrument gives a serviceable view of his achievement. In this book a start is made with the important opus 6 (the fourteen bagatelles which were found completely unacceptable to the public of 1908), and continues by way of the arrangements of folk-tunes as far as the sonata and concerto dated 1926.

Debussy's life was not at all spectacular, and the writer who set

out to make an 'arresting' narrative must be hard put to it to make the meagre facts go round. This short study improves as it gets to the more mature period of the life (if any part of that wayward, instinctive existence could be called mature). The early years give a vague picture of singularly harsh parental surroundings, followed by unwilling sojourn in the Villa Medici, where he liked neither Rome nor his fellow-lodgers. He was intensely Parisian, and when the late war came he found he was intensely French, a feeling which found terrible utterance in the poem he wrote called 'Noël des enfants qui n'ont plus de maison.' His letters, from youth onwards, are a valuable and always diverting part of the present volume. With all the Frenchman's ability to sketch with words, Debussy's nervous, often bitter, reactions to a world that must have been completely incomprehensible to him, made his pen into a rapier. In that he stands on a level with Berlioz, and it is probable that the 'Soirées de l'orchestre' was seldom far from his thoughts. M. Lépine's study is short and slight, but has room, nevertheless, for one serious blemish. Chapter VI contains a lot of vague statements of a psychological (or is it pathological?) nature. Until the reader has grasped the meaning of such a term as *cyclothymique*, which few dictionaries seem to elucidate, and searched medical books for an explanation of the *maladie de Dupré*, it is impossible to find out what is being talked about (and even then, the matter is not clear). If Debussy, as a medical 'case,' is discussed at all, then let us have the matter set out in plain speech.

Sc. G.

Bach. By Rutland Boughton. Kegan Paul and Curwen. 7s. 6d. net.

This latest study of Bach may be described in a variety of ways. Firstly, it is a personal contribution, particularly valuable as a document that reveals an intense modern character, that of the author who is, as well, high-ranked among our living composers. Further the book will prove important evidence of a certain stage in the evolution of democratic ideals, and will be found to possess much information as to an artist's reactions to a political idea. It is written by one who sees in Bach's music the reflection of his life, and in that life, thus reflected, struggles and repressions that were the result of misguided rule by a heartless aristocracy of a down-trodden people. It would be a needless waste of time to offer either agreement or disagreement with the many points of view which find such keen expression here. For the opinions are primarily personal to the author (as such they form an illuminating sociological document), and to superimpose merely another set of personal judgments would hardly be a useful way of reviewing the book. It is necessary to tell the intending purchaser that the book is strongly polemical, and exists on two planes, the political and the artistic, the one alternating with the other, although often they are made inseparable. Having so far safeguarded those who still may wish to see their own visions in music, and attracted those who enjoy the political scramble, we may pass on to the music itself. Where this is left free of the general circumambience of deduction and inference that swells the pages there is a good deal that is fresh and arresting. The discussion of Italian influence is skilfully conducted, though it is warped by the author's determination to see little good in Italian, much in German, art—a tendency that leads to some questionable attributions of

Germanic influence in, of all people, Giotto and Dante. But where the author is content to describe the form and dilate upon the content of definite movements among Bach's works, his vigorous style and often happy choice of phrase, no longer used to hammer home a political doctrine, provide the musician with what he wants for the understanding of Bach's technique. It is one composer talking about the work of another, and when the talker has an alive mind, as here, the result is of real importance. Such are the comparison between Bach and his contemporaries (p. 224), and that excellent feature, the criticism of gramophone records, which is of the best kind.

Sc. G.

BOOKS RECEIVED

The A B C of music. By T. C. Young. Oxford University Press.
Two volumes: 3s. 6d. each.

You can sing. By Clara Novello Davies. Selwyn and Blount. 6s.

A society for the investigation of Eastern music (Gesellschaft zur Erforschung der Musik des Orients) was started last August in Berlin, with the object of supporting and equipping scientific expeditions, and examining and evaluating the music and musical systems of the East. It will also arrange for occasional lectures and periodical publications, the first of which will be a commentary on al-Kindi's 'Treatise on the composition of melodies.' Committee, Dr. Johannes Wolf (chairman), Prof. E. v. Hornbostel, Dr. G. Schünemann, Dr. Lachmann (secretary). Annual subscription for members, 5 M. Address, c/o Prof. Dr. Johannes Wolf, 38, Unter den Linden, Berlin.

REVIEWS OF PERIODICALS

La Revue Musicale. Paris. August-September.

In answer to the denigration of Italian music which lately appeared in this journal over the signature of André Suarès there now appears a reasoned article by Henry Prunières putting the case for Italy. And thus the balance is restored. There is an informative research article by Léon Dorez on music in the time of Pope Paul III with special reference to the lutanist Francesco da Milano. An article by E. Haraszti adds to one's knowledge of Bela Bartók, and one by J. M. Schneider does the same for Krenek. Désiré Paque contributes an article on atonality, which he calls the unique chromatic mode. There is a note on Sibire (who wrote a treatise called the *Parfait Luthier*) by E. Deverin.

October.

A lengthy article by A. Machabey deals with Hindemith and his music. This is a useful, exhaustive study, with sections on rhythm, styles of writing, harmonic procedure, instrumentation, etc. Paul Netti's article on Freemasonry and music is worth reading. A discussion on modern German music for pianoforte is undertaken by Roland Tenschert. J. Samson deals with modern methods of teaching. Minna and Richard are the subject of a note by Y. Lacroix-Novaro. Schubert's 'Erlkönig' is subjected to examination, with the MSS. as basis, by E. Closson. The Directeur (Henry Prunières) contributes a descriptive article on the Liège Festival in which there occur some remarks about 'les anglais' which are not in the best taste. M. Prunières is annoyed with either our music or our countrymen, but we hope this is only a temporary matter (that he can be generous to a foreign nation is shown in his treatment of Italy in the preceding number of his journal), and that it will influence neither his more balanced judgment nor the deliberations of the board of judges for the ensuing festival in Oxford this year. The following sentences are taken from an article in the *Revue Musicale* (August, 1923) written by Prof. Dent, President of the I.S.C.M.: 'Du reste l'art n'a rien à voir avec la politique. . . . Si nous avons divisé la société en sections nationales, c'est une question de pure commodité pratique. . . . Mais l'égoïsme national est l'ennemi perpétuel et perfide de tout art véritable.'

November.

Descartes wrote the *Compendium musicae* when 22 years of age. The theories on the æsthetic of music contained in that essay are discussed in a useful article by Jan Racek. The life and career of an eighteenth century violinist, Alexandre Boucher, forms the material for an informative study by Marc Pincherle. A short article by A. Gastoué contains some instructive reflections on the ancestry of the Psalms, with the promise of further discussion of their music. Joaé Subirá contributes an article on stage music of eighteenth century Spain that repays attention.

La Rassegna Musicale. Turin. September.

The Italian composer Casella breaks a lance with Guido Pannain in the cause of modern Italian music. The question appears rather a domestic one, being based on what Italians think of their own music. In the following article Guido Pannain replies. Next there comes a long, carefully written study of critical methods, with reference mainly to criticism of music, both of performances and of works. This bears the signature: A. Parente. F. Flora writes on radio and cinema, dealing with the new means these bring to the dissemination of music. There is a charmingly illustrated article by A. Parigi on Caravaggio and those of his pictures that bear on music. The quarterly includes the usual features: reviews, foreign letters, etc.

De Musiek. Amsterdam. July.

A short article by Paul F. Sanders discusses music and its relation to present-day sociology. There is a note by E. W. Schallenberg on Chopin criticism. A fully illustrated article by F. van der Meuren deals at some length with characteristics of style in organ music from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries.

August-September.

S. Kalff contributes an article of interest to musicologists. This deals with two Netherlands musicians of the seventeenth century: Adrianus Valerius (Adrien Valéry, of French ancestry) of Veere, and Cornelis Schuyt, organist of Leiden. Paul Pisk writes on the letters of Hugo Wolf.

October.

An Alban Berg number. Berg himself writes about 'Wozzeck.' Paul Sanders and Willem Pyper contribute articles on the opera, the former from the point of view of the libretto, the latter from that of the music. Further, Berg writes amusingly (and somewhat bitterly) on 'Music of the future.'

November.

Prof. Smijers contributes an article on the history of music, with special reference to the newly-founded Chair of that subject in the University of Utrecht, to which he has been appointed. Dr. Wagenaar writes on educational matters in Holland. Franz Hannema discusses the general position of music there.

Sc. G.

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Choral Works.

Arthur Bliss. *Morning Heroes*. [Novello.] A symphony for orator, chorus and orchestra, first performed at the Norwich Festival, 1930. The words are taken from: Iliad (first movement), Walt Whitman's 'Drum Taps' (second movement), a poem by the eighth century Chinese Li-Tai-Po, and another from Walt Whitman's 'Drum Taps' (third movement), and Iliad (fourth movement), poems by Wilfred Owen and Robert Nichols (fifth movement). The choral writing is of a kind that makes great demands of agility and precision. When a chorus has reached assurance in these matters, getting Whitman's strange strings of words exactly in order, or striking a right balance between a shout and a chord in the fourth movement (the list of Heroes), or moving easily through the changes of the Vigil, nothing else modern will trouble them. This is a work for large resources.

George Dyson. *The Canterbury Pilgrims*. [O.U.P.] Chorus, orchestra and three soloists (S.T.B.). Words are a series of portraits chosen from the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales. The work is divided into thirteen sections. An ordinary size of orchestra is used, but the score is cued for a smaller one. The characterisation of the twelve pilgrims gives the composer the opportunity for showing skill in musical draughtsmanship. Probably this cantata would make a successful array of *tableaux vivants* or a puppet play. The vocal writing is smooth, both for soloists and chorus.

Ethel Smyth. *The Prison*. [Curwen.] A symphony for soprano and bass-baritone soli, chorus and orchestra. Words adapted from 'The prison: a dialogue,' by H. B. Brewster. The work is in two parts, 'Close on freedom' and 'The deliverance.' The allegory sets forth the struggle to escape from Self. The choral writing is exacting and will need great accuracy of intonation adequately to compass the varied harmonic progressions. Work on such music will certainly be continually interesting.

The three works noticed above appear to have nothing in common as regards style. Arthur Bliss is nearest to what is felt to be the present-day manner. The subject of his symphony is war, which in itself is a reason, or an excuse, for unharnessing emotions. It is difficult to judge the work as music, for the words get in the way. Both here, and in Ethel Smyth's work, some difficult verbal problems are given the singers. Composers do not realise the danger of certain expressions to which they add the extra emphasis of music, and sail perilously near the trite or even the laughable. Musically 'The Prison' is that blend of German and French that its composer is absolute mistress of. George Dyson glances at France, as it were over Vaughan-Williams's shoulder. Of the three, he is the most kindly disposed both to the words he sets and to the singers. His

work most closely approximates to what it might be possible to think of as an English school of composition, showing signs of Tudor and folk-song influence.

Songs.

Brahms: New love-song waltzes. An edition of the *Neue Liebeslieder* published in four forms: Mixed voices with pianoforte, mixed voice choir (chorus parts only), female voice choir (same), male voice choir (same). English text. [O.]

Clara Edwards: 'The day's begun.' [Sch.]

Eugène Goossens: 'Chamber music,' six songs for medium voice to words by James Joyce. Singers must not miss this set. They may not find it possible to get to know the songs intimately, but they must know of them. These six are an important contribution to modern English song writing, and have also importance in the composer's career, for they seem to mark a change. There is directness and a more restrained use of material. The vocal line is supple and expressive, the accompaniment singularly spare. 'Now, O now' has great beauty, though the other five have beauty as well. As regards actual singing, there is not much difficulty for those who have sure intonation. As for interpretation, there is a different problem, to solve which in these fine songs will be an interesting matter. [Cur.]

William Gow and David Coutts: Odes of Horace. Nine attractive settings. They are for school use, much to be recommended. Not difficult, but musical and good to sing. [O.]

Patrick Hadley: Lullaby. His songs are always welcome. This one needs a good singer (with control of high notes for the soft 'lullaby my little boy' at the end), and will sound its best with the string accompaniment. [O.]

Arthur Nevin: 'When the swans fly.' [Sch.]

Elizabeth Maconchy: Three songs (published separately). These are unostentatious settings of Herrick, Ben Jonson and Shakespeare. They will be pleasant to sing. [O.]

Jeffrey Mark: 'Where be ye going?' A plain, tuneful setting of Keats. [O.]

Lodewyk Mortelmans: Six songs (published separately). There is little to say about these. The descriptive leaflet uses the words 'cultured' and 'refined.' That is exactly right. One of these gentle compositions has the direction *amabile* put above the voice part, and that describes the whole set. The words are by the great Flemish poet Guido Gezelle, but they seem to have lost some of their tang in translation. Anyhow, this is not the Flanders of Charles Coster and Felix Timmermans. [Pa.]

D. A. Peache: An ancient rune of hospitality. Good words set sensitively. [O.]

Lodovico Rocca: Two songs, words by Tennyson. [Ch.]

R. Vaughan Williams: Wedding chorus from 'Sir John in love.' S.A.T.B., and pianoforte. It is a good move to have made this available in handy form.

Ten French Songs (17th and 18th centuries) make a pleasant collection. Words under the care of Gertrude Rutherford, accompaniments by Ella Ivimey. [Au.]

Orchestra.

Eugène Goossens: Three Greek dances. Moderate sized orchestra (single wood wind, one horn, one trumpet, not more than 32 string

players, celesta, pianoforte, small percussion). The dances can either be performed as concert pieces, or as music to a ballet of present-day 'Grecian' choreography. The score, which dates from 1927, is clear and the orchestration not heavy. Expert players needed, for this is no amateur's music. [Cur.]

Constant Lambert: Music for orchestra. The latest orchestral work by this composer. It will be remembered, by those who heard it in London, for its firm construction and for the final climax which is magnificently sonorous. But neither a single hearing, nor having the full score before one, gives what further performances could provide. The work has much interest for those who follow the course of modern English music. It should be given sufficient performance at least for us to get to know it, if only that. [O.]

Peter Warlock and André Mangeot: Five movements for string orchestra edited from sixteenth century sources. Titles as follows:—A knell, by Robert Johnson, Perslis Clocke, by Osbert Parsley (incredible, but true), Je file, by Robert Parsons, A galliard, by the same, Hackney, by Clement Woodcocke. Amateurs, for whom these pieces may have been written, have cause once again to be grateful for the labours of the researcher. Each of these is a delight to study, none of them is difficult to play, they are all charming to hear. [Cur.]

Sc. G.

GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

Orchestral

COLUMBIA. Sibelius: *Symphony No. 2 in D major* (Orchestra conducted by Prof. Robert Kajanus). This is the most notable issue of the season. The conductor is in close contact with the composer, hence the record may be taken as authoritative, and such readings as the *pizzicato* (*spiccato* in the score) in the slow movement (10 bars after F), and the omission of a low B flat (same movement, one bar before C) on two bassoons, unison soli (the rest of the orchestra silent) appear, at least in the former case, to be intentional.

Brahms: *Academic Festival Overture* (Concertgebouw orchestra conducted by Willem Mengelberg). The playing is excellent, everything in place, not a slip nor a moment's hesitation. On the fourth side of this fine performance is an equally good one of the third movement of the C minor symphony.

Joseph Holbrooke: *Funeral March, 'Bronwen'* (Orchestra conducted by Claude Powell). This makes an effective excerpt and one is glad to have it. The music is rich and romantic, the performance seems to be a good one.

Joseph Holbrooke: *'Bronwen' Overture* (as above). The opera to which this forms the overture can be known to few. It is the third of a trilogy called 'The cauldron of Anwyn,' the libretto by T. E. Ellis (Lord Howard de Walden). This record shows the music to be heavily dramatic and thickly scored.

Saint-Saëns: *Danse macabre* (Orchestra symphonique conducted by Phillipe Gaubert). Neat playing and faithful reproduction. The music is Saint-Saëns at his best, with a surprising absence of frippery. It may seem fatuous, but at least it does not sprawl as the concertos and symphonies do.

Richard Strauss: *Rosenkavalier waltzes* (Berlin Philharmonic conducted by Bruno Walter). If this is all we can get in the way of records of the opera it is better than nothing though this set of waltzes is not the only good thing, by far, to be extracted from the score. The record before us is, however, good all through and is finely played.

Tschaikovsky: *Fantasia-ouverture 'Romeo und Juliet'* (Concertgebouw orchestra conducted by Willem Mengelberg). Like all Concertgebouw records this is perfectly satisfying as regards performance. One can trust oneself to Mengelberg and his players safely, for they never seem to play tricks with the music. The record is highly recommended.

Ravel: *Bolero* (the Amsterdam Concertgebouw orchestra conducted by Willem Mengelberg). Remarkably satisfying. An example of the best type of orchestral record. Nothing is sacrificed to ostentatious display, but everything is done in a decent manner. The pace is, as it should be, unvaried from beginning to end. The gradual crescendo is superbly done. To take on speed and the right increase of tone in

performing a work broken into four fragments must have required nice judgment. Much to be recommended.

J. S. Bach: *Brandenburg concerto No. 6 for strings* (Symphony orchestra conducted by Sir Henry Wood). The playing is sprightly, though there is roughness, especially in the first movement, and, somewhat less, in the last. The ensemble also fails at places. With the score the record is useful for study purposes. Taken as a performance, there is much to be improved on.

Weingartner: *Beethoven's 'Hammerklavier' pianoforte sonata transcribed for full orchestra* (Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Weingartner). On what are called 'student's days' at our public galleries there may be seen, apart from the students, a number of professional copiers busy making facsimiles of the classics. This record is just such a copy. But whereas the copiers at the National Gallery render the pictures in the medium in which they first were produced, Weingartner, in arranging a pianoforte sonata for full orchestra does as would a copier who reproduced an etching in the form and substance of an oil painting. He is as capable and clever in this transcription as any of the most skilful copiers (and those who have seen them at work will realise that this is high praise), and the result has a great deal of Beethoven about it. It is an interesting curiosity.

H.M.V. Delibes: *Variations and Waltz of the Hours, from 'Coppelia'* (orchestra conducted by Clemens Schmalstich). Anybody's music, and now they can enjoy it in private, excellently recorded.

Glinka: *Komarinskaya* (L.S.O. conducted by Albert Coates). Another record of this fine music, and a welcome one. The playing is energetic and orderly. A sister record is of the overture to Glinka's *Russian and Ludmilla* (Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Frederick Stock), but the style of the Rossini-like music is in absolute contrast to Komarinskaya. The playing of this record is delightfully clear. On its other side is Wagner's *Träume*, also very well performed by the same orchestra and conductor, the two movements giving an exciting hint of what is going on (musically) in Chicago.

Glazounov: *Les ruses d'amour and Bacchanale* (Covent Garden orchestra conducted by John Barbirolli). *Scènes de Ballet* (New symphony orchestra conducted by Eugène Goossens). The first is a little *pièce de style*, rather stiff. The second was a triumph in Diaghilev's days. Now, set out by itself, it seems to have lost flavour though it is the best of 'The seasons.' Performance here is fair. The brass take a moment too long to get into the stride in the *Bacchanale*. The six sides of *Scènes de ballet* are not very thrilling. Some of the tunes are worth hearing, but nothing stays long in the memory. The performance has vitality and seems perfectly adequate.

Handel: *Pastoral symphony and overture from 'Messiah'* (L.S.O. conducted by Dr. Malcolm Sargent). This, because of the *Pastoral symphony*, is a Christmas record. So, too, is *A Noel Fantasy* (Covent Garden orchestra conducted by the composer, Hely Hutchinson).

Humperdinck: *Two excerpts from 'Hansel und Gretel'* (Berlin State Opera orchestra conducted by Clemens Schmalstich). The 'Witches' Ride' and the 'Gingerbread Waltz,' both played with magnificent go. The Waltz is its old exhilarating self and wears wonderfully well. One realises one has wanted this record since long.

Mussorgsky: *The Persian Dances from 'Khovantchina'* (L.S.O. conducted by Albert Coates). This double-side is a valuable addition

to Mussorgsky gramophone music. The recording is clear and the performance (Tsimsky-Korsakov's orchestration) sounds excellent.

Ravel: *Botero* (Boston symphony orchestra conducted by Serge Kussevisky). The weakness here is that the whole thing is taken too fast, so that the pace is continually having to be held up to accommodate one or the other instrument, and the important characteristic of the piece, its unceasing even stride, is completely lost.

Rossini: *Overture to 'The Barber of Seville'* (New York Philharmonic conducted by Toscanini). Admirably done in every way. There is nothing to be said, except to advise those who can listen to Rossini to get it.

Saint-Saens: *Le rouet d'Omphale* (New York Philharmonic conducted by Willem Mengelberg). The playing is such that one could not wish better. The music sounds empty enough.

Tschaikovsky: *Violin concerto* (Mischa Elman and the L.S.O. conducted by John Barbirolli). A creditable record. The tone of the violin is adequately reproduced. The solo part is very ably played (a suspicion of faulty intonation on record four). On the whole the accompaniment, which is neat and exact, is a little too retiring.

Schubert: *The Unfinished symphony* (Philadelphia symphony orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski). With one of the softer sorts of needle this sounds very fair. The music, which can always sing itself, is treated with some exaggeration here and there. The orchestra shows some good rich tone.

Sullivan: *Overture 'In Memoriam'* (New symphony orchestra conducted by Dr. Malcolm Sargent). This excellent and capable work here receives performance of a kind that does it justice. No need to recommend this, it already has its public.

Beethoven: *Pianoforte concerto in G major* (Wilhelm Backhaus and the L.S.O. conducted by Sir Landon Ronald). It is one token of the gramophone's significance as a modern convenience that it can place not only such a work as this in one's hands but such a remarkably fine performance, to have always at command. This is a library edition, to be kept carefully for future pleasure.

Solo Instruments

COLUMBIA. Brahms: *'Edward' ballade* (Pianoforte, Harriet Cohen). An honourable account, slightly mannered. The B flat Intermezzo (Op. 76) is fluently played, and benefits by being left alone. This side makes pleasant hearing.

Liszt: *La campanella* (Pianoforte, William Murdoch). A straightforward performance of this showy trifle.

Liszt: *Au bord d'une source* and *Study in F minor* (Pianoforte, Solomon). Brilliant execution. The first piece is charming.

Schumann: *Carnaval* (Pianoforte, Leopold Godowsky). Magnificent playing. Godowsky is a famous editor and transcriber of music. Here he refrains, except for adding a range of octaves in the first movement, and for the suppression of four blank bars out of the last eight.

Folk-dance records. These are a great delight, and apart from the pleasure they give their usefulness will certainly be immense. The pipe and tabor music (Joan Sharp) is altogether out of the usual. There are four of these dances recorded and the record is, by a clever device, so arranged that the dances are separated although on the same side, and do not run on. Then there are some solo violin dances pleasantly played by Miss Elsie Avril (these also are arranged

with the same useful device). Further there are six Scottish country dances and reels on three records, played by the National Folk Dance orchestra conducted by Stanford Robinson. All this material will be invaluable to folk-dance organisations, and only those who have wearily sweated at the pianoforte will know what a boon the gramophone can be.

H.M.V. Albeniz: *Tango* (Pianoforte, Backhaus). A delightful performance. On the reverse Schumann's *Aufschwung*.

Beethoven: *The Pathétique sonata* (Mark Hambourg). A sound performance, though the tone of the instrument wavers a good deal.

Chopin: *Nocturne No. 10* (Lamond). The playing has its fine side, but there is an immense amount of wayward treatment of the rhythm, continual *rubato* of a choppy kind. On the reverse is an arrangement by Liszt of a Rossini *Cujus animam* (*Stabat Mater*), one of those amazingly clever, wholly vulgar things that hardly seem worth perpetuating.

Dohnanyi: *Capriccio in F minor* (Pianoforte, Vladimir Horowitz). A showy piece played with magnificent assurance. Here indeed is a technique. On the reverse Liszt's *Valse oubliée* beautifully done.

Dvorak: '*Songs my mother taught me*' and *Slavonic dance in G minor* (Kreisler). Both exquisite. There seems to be nothing left to say about Kreisler, superlatives are exhausted.

Moskowski: *Waltz in E minor* (Pianoforte, Arthur de Greef). This is a curious choice, among all the pianoforte music that still awaits recording. Really there is nothing here worth listening to. The performance, though, is good.

Mozart: *Adagio from violin concerto in G major* (Yehudi Menuhin). The playing of this side shows what a great violinist there is here in the making. It is a pleasure to hear such clarity and warmth of tone. On the reverse a *Sarabande and Tambourin* by Leclair, equally perfect.

Rozycki: *Legende* (Pianoforte, Niedzielski). A simple little thing. The playing is poetical. On the reverse Strauss' *Thousand and one nights*. The pianist evidently has a serviceable technique for brilliant things such as the latter.

Wesley: *Aria* (Organ, G. D. Cunningham). This is unusual and has an attractive quality that makes it worth hearing again. On the reverse a Wesley *Gavotte* (not so worth while) and a Bach *Choral prelude*. The performance is very capable.

Chamber Music

Bach: *Sonata for violin and pianoforte in G major* (Adolf Busch and Rudolf Serkin). No one could possibly grudge shelf-space for a record of these fine artists. The one in question faithfully reproduces their manner of interpreting the classics, and the music itself is wonderful.

Brahms: *Sonata for violin and pianoforte in D minor* (Isolde Menges and Harold Samuel). Finished playing, a good ensemble, tone of both instruments mainly well produced (pianoforte less evanescent than is usual). To be recommended.

Mozart: *String quintet in G minor* (the Lener quartet and L. d'Oliviera). Criticism is dumb before such a combination of the loveliest music and the most perfect execution as this record shows. Let the musician play through the minuet, for instance, and marvel

at the onward flow of the whole thing, with no needless slackenings, and yet no sense of hurry. And that sort of thing informs the whole performance. The record is irresistible.

Vocal

COLUMBIA. Holbrooke: *Taliessin's song* and *Bran's answer*, from 'Bronwen' (John Coates and orchestra). None better than this singer could have been chosen, with his always clear diction to help the listener through the difficult task of becoming acquainted with a new operatic work. There is also issued the *Cradle song* from the same opera, well sung by Doris Vane.

Mozart: *Thou O love (Figaro, English)* and *Allelujah*. Two attractively performed records by Miriam Licette. There is too much portamento on the first side. The second is being sung to death just now.

Richard Strauss: *Traum durch die Dämmerung* (Alexander Kipnis). A beautiful performance. This and its reverse (Schumann's *Mondnacht*) make a wholly satisfying record.

H.M.V. Bach: *'Twas in the cool of eventide (St. Matthew Passion)* and *Aria from Cantata No. 205* (Keith Falkner and orchestra). Neither music nor singer needs commendation. This fine voice is here recorded with great adequacy. The two sides are contrasted in feeling.

Boito: *Forma ideal and Amore, mistero* from 'Mefistofele' (Fanelli, Pauli and Msini, with Scala chorus and orchestra). This is magnificent tearing Italian singing, interesting as coming from a work little recorded here.

Gounod: *Le veau d'or* and *Vous qui faites l'endormie*, from 'Faust' (Chaliapine and Cozette with orchestra). The old magic. Pity the French comes through so distorted. But the voice makes up for all that.

Handel: *What though I trace (Solomon)* and *The people that walked (Messiah)* (Keith Falkner and orchestra). A delightful couple of sides, sung with great artistic feeling. The singer is placed very far forward both in this and in the Bach record above.

Saint-Saëns: *Softly awakes my heart* and *Love comes to my aid*, from 'Samson' (Marion Anderson and orchestra). Both of these are ably sung, and one is glad to have a record of this fine voice.

Wagner: *Blick ich umher (Tannhäuser)* and *Jerum! jerum!* (Meistersinger) (Schorr and orchestra). The finest quality Wagner singing. Either side contains magnificent dramatic performance.

Wagner: *Sieh' Er'chen! Dächt' ich doch!* and *Hat man mit dem Schuhwerk (Meistersinger)* (Elisabeth Rethberg and Friederich Schorr). Nothing wrong here. The performance is on a consistently high level, both as regards the voices and the orchestral accompaniment (if such one can call that rich score).

Choral

COLUMBIA. An issue of a number of records of sacred music will be found useful. Those recorded in the Central Hall, Westminster, where a choir of four hundred sang, suffer from reverberations and from the unavoidable looseness of attack that must come from so large a body of singers. *Thou wilt keep him (Wesley)* is one of the most successful. The Gibbons *Nunc Dimittis* is taken too fast. The Stanford service in B flat comes through well. The two sides contributed by the choir of St. George's Chapel, Windsor, are much better. The choir is more

manageable in size, attack is cleaner and gradations of tone more supple. The Sterndale Bennet *O that I knew* has a restrained dramatic force that affords a telling example of what live choral singing can be.

Gretschaninov: *Three songs* (Don Cossacks). The tune of one of the wedding songs is used in Mussorgsky's *Boris*, presumably a folk-song. These three are sung with all the weird effects and astonishing virtuosity of this remarkable body of singers.

H.M.V. Bach: *O man bemoan* (*St. Matthew Passion*) (Westminster Abbey Special Choir). After a somewhat perfunctory-sounding organ introduction there comes a choral performance that goes well. Balance is at times uneven, but on the whole the recording is successful.

Brahms: *Alto rhapsody* (Sigrid Onegin, the Berlin Doctor's Choir, the Berlin State Opera orchestra conducted by Dr. Kurt Singer). This is a very mixed affair. The orchestra is adequate throughout. The male voice choir does on the whole fairly, if a little stiffly. The soloist starts well, except for the two huge portamenti on 'die Ode.' At the entry of the M.V. choir, however, there is a noticeable falsity in the intonation which definitely mars the performance, as far as the solo part is concerned.

Brahms: *How lovely is Thy dwelling place* (*the German Requiem*) (The Temple Choir). A gentle, thoughtful piece of singing. The balance between choir and organ is well kept. This is a good record.

Sc. G.

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| 1. O Golden Age of Innocence . . . | O wüsst' ich doch den Weg . . . |
| 2. Come soon | Komm bald |
| 3. Spell of the Fields | Feldeinsamkeit |
| 4. To the Nightingale | An die Nachtigall |
| 5. Woodland Solitude | In Waldeinsamkeit |
| 6. Forlorn | Ich schleich umher . . . |
| 7. Love Song | Minnelied |
| 8. I Dreamed . . . | Es träumte mir . . . |
| 9. Sapphic Ode | Sapphische Ode |
| 10. Oh, Lovely her Cheeks . . . | O liebliche Wangen . . . |
| 11. The Blacksmith | Der Schmied |
| 12. Her Window | Vor dem Fenster |
| 13. Rose-lipt Maid | Mein Mädel hat ein Rosenmund |
| 14. Vain his pleading! | Vergebliches Ständchen |
| 15. Night Lay so still . . . | In stiller Nacht |

Vol. 2.

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|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Love and the Lilac Flower | Meine Liebe ist grün . . . |
| 2. Twilight | Dämm'ung senkte sich . . . |
| 3. Nightingale . . . | Nachtigall |
| 4. On the Lake | Auf dem See |
| 5. Swallow from over the Sea . . . | Das Mädchen spricht |
| 6. Constancy | Liebestreu |
| 7. No longer to entreat you . . . | Nicht mehr zu dir zu gehen . . . |
| 8. Ever Lighter . . . | Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer |
| 9. The Message | Botschaft |
| 10. To a Violet | An ein Veilchen |
| 11. Haven (In how kind a fashion) | So willst du des Armen . . . |
| 12. Why go Barefoot, Pretty One . . . | Feinsliebchen, du sollst mir . . . |
| 13. Parting | Scheiden und Meiden |
| 14. Serenade | Ständchen |
| 15. Roses three . . . | Röslein dreie in der Reihe |

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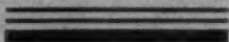
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